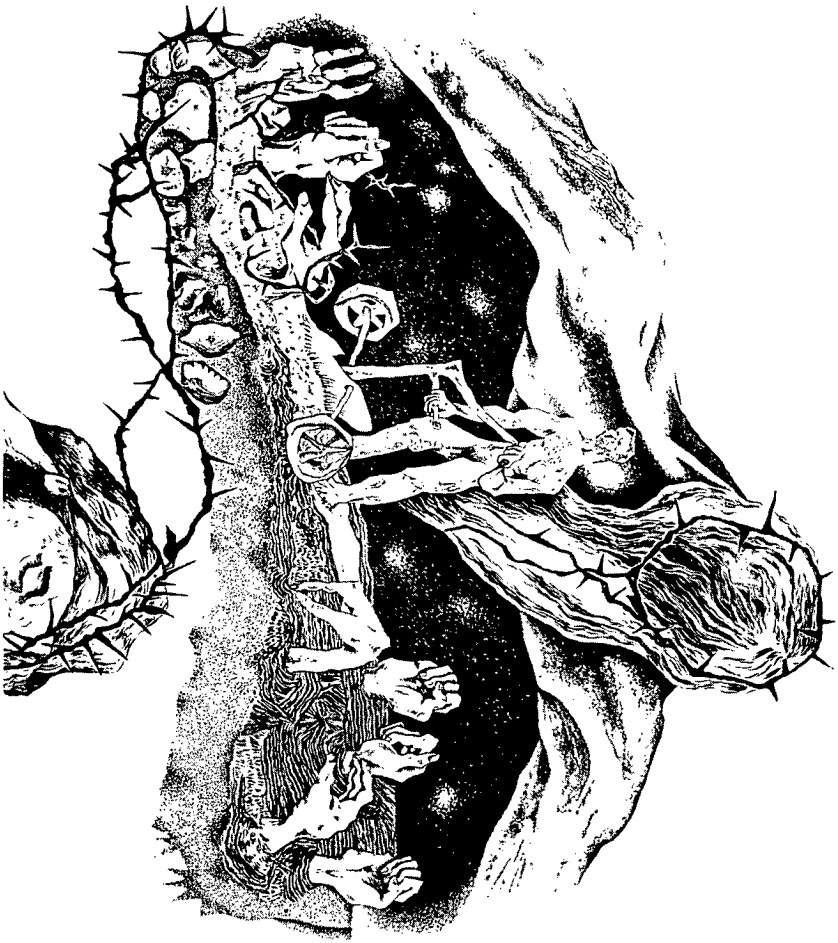
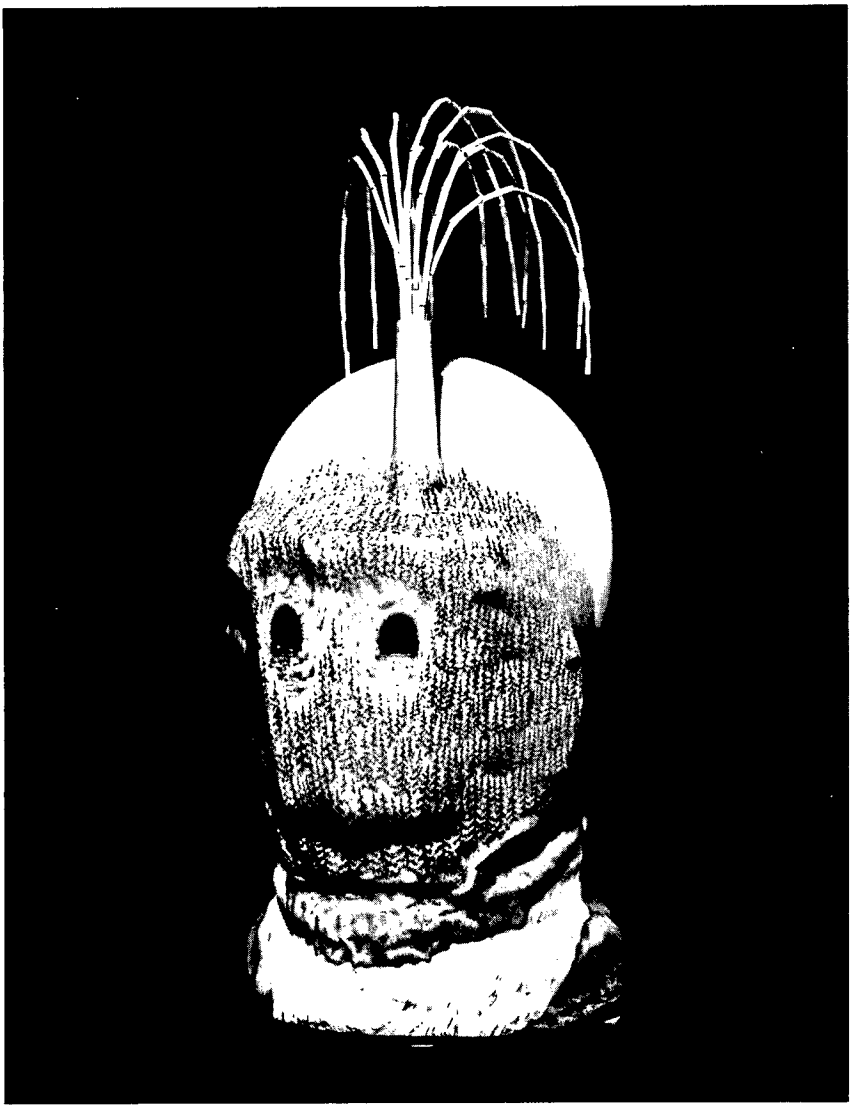
Dispossession and the Artistic Imagination

I. Siqueiros (Mex.) *Proletarian Mother*

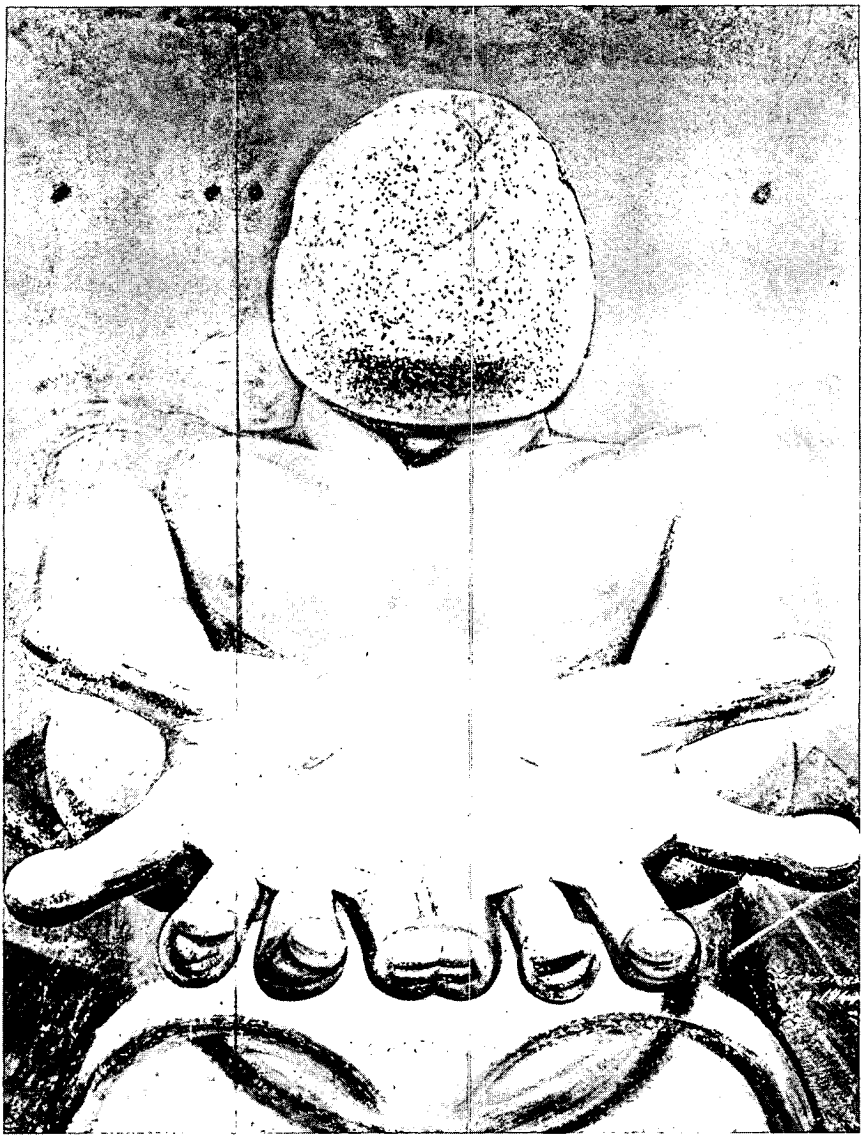


II. Proch (Can.) *Walking Plow*

III. Siqueiros (Mex.) *Mine Disaster*



IV. Proch (Can.) *Manitoba Mining Mask*



V. Siqueiros (Mex.) *Our Present Image*

VI. Clark (Can.) *The Puzzle*

VII. Siqueiros (Mex.) *Echo of a Scream*

VIII. Clark (Can.) *Untitled*

IX. Siqueiros (Mex.) Detail of Tacuba

X. Warkov (Can.) *The Scream Room*

I. David Alfaro Siqueiros, Mexico, *Proletarian Mother*, 1930 oil on canvas, 98-3/8 x 70-7/8".

II. Donald Proch, Canada, *Walking Plow*, 1971, silkscreen with graphite emulsion, 42 x 48", coll. St. John's College, University of Manitoba. Photo: Ernest Mayer.

III. David Alfaro Siqueiros, Mexico, *Mine Disaster*, 1931, oil on canvas, 48 x 78-3/4", Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, Mexico City.

IV. Donald Proch, Canada, *Manitoba Mining Mask*, 1976, silverpoint and graphite on fibreglass, stainless steel and bone construction, 62.0 x 32.3 x 36.0 cm, coll. University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon. Photo: Ernest Mayer.

V. David Alfaro Siqueiros, Mexico, *Our Present Image*, 1947, pyroxylin on masonite, 86-5/8 x 67-3/4", Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, Mexico City.

VI. Kelly Clark, Canada, *The Puzzle*, 1975, graphite drawing, 23 x 31", coll. K.J. Hughes.

VII. David Alfaro Siqueiros, Mexico, *Echo of a Scream*, 1937, duco on masonite, 48 x 35-1/2", Museum of Modern Art, New York.

VIII. Kelly Clark, Canada, *Untitled*, 1963, oil on canvas, about 48 x 48".

IX. David Alfaro Siqueiros, Mexico, Detail of Tacuba from the *Torture of Cuauhtémoc*, 1950.

X. Esther Warkov, Canada, *The Scream Room*, 1975, oil on linen, 100 x 72".

THE PROBLEMATIC OF MARGINALITY IN MEXICAN PHILOSOPHY

When José Gaos, a student of José Ortega y Gasset and a noted philosopher in his own right, encountered Mexican philosophy as a refugee from Franco's Spain he was surprised to learn that it addressed the central problems of human existence competently and profoundly. Gaos found that the two great initiators of speculative thought in twentieth century Mexico, Antonio Caso and José Vasconcelos, had penetrated in their reflections to the core of existential philosophy before the European movement of existentialism had become self-conscious. According to Gaos, Caso antedated Gabriel Marcel in highlighting "the contingency of the performance of good action, the 'scientific' uncertainty of hope and of faith," and Vasconcelos, independently of European realists, developed and elaborated the thesis that all purely eidetic knowledge fails to capture reality, which is composed of singular and individual entities.[1] Gaos, however, is one of the few philosophers from outside of Mexico who acknowledges that Mexicans have made original contributions to speculative thought. Even Mexican thinkers themselves are reluctant to honor the achievements of their own tradition and often prefer to complain about the lack of philosophical excellence in their ambient. The proof that Mexican philosophers should be read not primarily for insight into Mexican culture but for their elucidation of important questions can be accomplished only by a serious encounter with their work such as Gaos undertook. Unfortunately, almost none of that work has been translated into English.

Ignorance of Mexican philosophy, particularly in the English-speaking world, is a result of several factors, the most important of which is cultural chauvinism. Although the United States shares a border with Mexico it is resistant to any contact with Mexican thought. The Mexicans import philosophy and social theory from the United States, but they are not encouraged to export their intellectual production. Philosophers from the United States and, surely, from Canada, too, would if they entered into the Mexican intellectual world be astonished at the density of its life and at its separation and distance from their own. Mexico, for the United States, is a source of raw materials, a place to set up factories which draw upon a pool of cheap labor, the origin of illegal immigrants, and the seat of a culture which produces Indian handicrafts and an exotic cuisine. Above all, for the middle class it is a place to vacation and perhaps to retire. Mexico is decidedly not, for the North American, a center to attract seekers after philosophical truth or wisdom. Putting aside a persistent racism directed against Mexicans, which is an important component of social attitudes in the United States, cultural

chauvinism is primarily expressed as an unexamined, because so deeply-rooted judgment that one can learn about the Mexicans but not from them. This judgment, which is scarcely ever made conscious because it is so pervasive, effectively forecloses contact by intellectuals in the United States with Mexican philosophy. The indifference toward Mexican thought of intellectuals in the United States indicates a far deeper chauvinism than either contempt or opposition would show. Contempt and opposition incorporate at least acknowledgment of the other. Indifference and ignorance dissolve a dimension of the other's being, that dimension which William James called the "social self."

Mexican philosophers are aware that they are ignored by North Americans and also by most Europeans. The indifference toward them of those in the centers of Western intellectual life is an aspect of what they call the "marginalization" of their country and its culture. As it became apparent in the second quarter of the twentieth century that, as the Mexican humanist Alfonso Reyes put it, Mexican intellectuals would not be invited to the banquet table of Western civilization, although they had many contributions to offer. Mexican philosophers increasingly made their marginality the basic theme of their speculative projects. The proclivity to turn inward, which generated both self-criticism and critique of imperialism, made their work even less accessible to outsiders than it was previously. The philosophy of "lo Mexicano" (that which is Mexican), which Francisco Vazquez analyzes and critiques in his essay "Philosophy in Mexico," is a result of the recognition of and response to marginalization. Raymond Rocco's study, "Ideology and Domination," shows how Leopoldo Zea, the leading contemporary Mexican philosopher, has made of marginality the starting point of a philosophy of history. Particularly in Zea's case a concern with the marginality of Mexico has led to a critique of cultural imperialism in Latin America as a whole and, finally, in the Third World. Vazquez remarks that Mexican philosophers today have little concern with their cultural tradition and have turned to Marxism or logical analysis for their inspiration. This tendency reflects the universalization of the Mexican problematic and the emergence of Mexico as a central actor in Third World politics. The new universalism, however, may be short lived if a new nationalism arises from the exploitation of Mexico's petroleum reserves.

The current preoccupation with "scientific" philosophy in Mexico is a throwback to the period prior to the Revolution of 1910 when the positivism of Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer was the official doctrine of Mexico's educational system and the major legitimating ideology of the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz. The Golden Age of Mexican philosophy in the early part of the twentieth century was rooted in a revolt against their positivistic education by a group of young intellectuals who had been selected to be the future elite of

the Porfirian system. Caso and Vasconcelos were among the prominent members of the Ateneo de Juventud, a remarkable study circle which fostered a return to the classics of Western humanism, exploration of indigenous traditions, and familiarity with the irrationalist movements dominating European thought at the time. The program of the Ateneo was nothing less than an effort at re-education and self-education by a group of brilliant young people who had been denied the opportunity to study metaphysics or any non-scientific discipline. They discredited the Porfirian system of education and the positivist ideology before the Revolution destroyed the positivistic polity. The thought of Arthur Schopenhauer, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Henri Bergson was blended by Caso and Vasconcelos with Platonism to create original philosophies closely resembling those of such figures as Max Scheler in Germany, Alfred North Whitehead in England, and George Santayana in the United States. The productive synthesis of classicism and vitalism was responsible for the anticipations of existentialism which Gaos found in the thought of Caso and Vasconcelos. This synthesis also prepared the way for the next generation's reception of Ortega y Gasset's historicism, which was grounded in "vital rationalism." For more than fifty years, then, Mexican philosophy was vitalistic and existential, another factor distancing it from the English-speaking world. During this period Mexican nationality was consolidated and Mexican philosophy expressed and reflected that historical process. Perhaps the new turn to "scientific" philosophy indicates that Mexican nationality has become secure, but it may also be a sign of more intensive economic and political exploitation.

The problematic of marginality, which was not a direct concern of Caso and Vasconcelos, was brought most sharply into focus by those thinkers, pre-eminently Zea and Emilio Uranga, who in the aftermath of World War II and the attendant decolonization explored the Mexican mind and its relation to the development of Western thought and civilization. Zea and Uranga believed that they found in the philosophies of Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre categories which would illuminate the "being of the Mexican." For Uranga marginalization meant being defined by the imperialist West as "accidental" in contrast to the oppressor's substantiality. He quotes Hegel as stating that America is an accident of Europe and maintains that "*this proposition must be taken to the dot of the I.*"[2] Uranga argues that historically what has passed for the description of the human essence has been an abstraction of the concrete European, who has defined himself as substantiality and self-sufficiency. He claims that from the beginnings of its history Mexico has suffered a "devaluation" because its people were not similar to Europeans and indeed were judged as insufficient by Europeans *a priori.* Uranga's response to cultural imperialism is to perform a "cynical gesture," which consists in "boasting about what the old morality considers

detestable."[3] In short, Uranga urges that Mexicans should affirm their accidentality as a universal character of human existence, turning the tables on the West by declaring substantiality to be a product of false consciousness rooted in chauvinism, domination, and false generalization. Ironically, Uranga appropriates the cynical gesture from Heidegger and Sartre. The philosophy of marginality, then, is a gift of the center to the periphery.

Consciousness of their marginality has made Mexican and more generally Latin American philosophers hypercritical with regard to the nature of their work and self-conscious and in doubt about their vocations. Although an observer such as Gaos could find much to praise in the Mexican and other Latin American traditions, Ibero-American thinkers themselves have critiqued their traditions, calling their philosophical heritage "inauthentic" while simultaneously having to defend that legacy because it is all that they can call their own. In the case of Mexico there has been ready acknowledgment of a persistent gap between the ideals projected by speculative thought and the social reality from which these ideals arose and to which they referred. The positivist program of substituting administration for politics masked a reality of political and economic exploitation. The ideal of charity projected by Antonio Caso and the norm of aesthetic completion formulated by José Vasconcelos compensated for the bureaucratization of the Mexican Revolution. The ideal community of persons projected by Leopoldo Zea helped legitimate the routinization of the Mexican regime. Vazquez relates the gap between the ideal and the real to the "political economy of discourse" which marginalizes intellectuals and makes their proposals irrelevant and, presumably, encourages irresponsibility. Both Vazquez and Rocco are concerned primarily with the unity of theory and practice and, thus, fall directly within the Mexican tradition. Neither of them accomplishes a unification, perhaps because none is possible. Mexican thinkers are disturbed that their philosophies have not contributed directly to the transformation of society. But is this not too much to ask of philosophy?

Perhaps the very will to make philosophy a transformative agent rather than to follow Ortega in declaring that it is a free activity of clarification which works its effects indirectly is the deepest symptom of marginalization. Sartre wrote in *Anti-Semite and Jew* that "one must be sure of one's rights and firmly rooted in the world, one must be free of the fears that each day assail the oppressed minorities or classes, before one dare raise questions about the place of man in the world and his ultimate destiny."[4] Mexican philosophers have persisted in raising questions about human meaning despite their marginalization, but they seem to have been assailed by guilt when they had to express the antinomies of existence. The Mexican philosopher's triumph has been to be a philosopher *malgré lui*, to let the gap between the ideal and the

actual open up despite all the pressures of conscience to cover the wound or to try to heal it.

Michael and Deena Weinstein

Notes

1. José Gaos, *En Torno a la Filosofía Mexicana*, México: Pórrua y Obregon, 1952, pp. 66-67.
2. Emilio Uranga, *Análisis del Ser del Mexicano*, México: Pórrua y Obregon, 1952, p. 70.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 99.
4. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew*, New York: Grove Press, 1948, p. 133.

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PHILOSOPHY IN MEXICO: THE OPIUM OF THE INTELLECTUALS OR A PROPHETIC INSIGHT?

Francisco H. Vazquez

> In Mexico the public word, since the Cartas de Relación by Cortéz to the latest State of the Union Address, has been sequestered by power.
>
> Carlos Fuentes.

Taking philosophy in twentieth century Mexico as a case in point, this paper will describe the process through which the intellectual labor of Mexican intellectuals was appropriated in order to minimize its material impact on society. It is often argued that the works of Mexican intellectuals manifests a critical gap between theory and practice, between the expressed desire to solve national problems and the meager impact on the material realities of the nation. One might conclude, then, that philosophy was in effect an opium for Mexican intellectuals. But, on the contrary, recent research indicates that Mexican philosophers have made a significant contribution to the discussion of problems faced by post-industrial societies.[1] Dreamers or prophets? This is a question that must be resolved in order to fully appreciate the intellectual production of Mexican thinkers and to gain an understanding of the process by which language, as a material condition, affects the will, nay, the consciousness of man.

A principal assumption underlying the following discussion is that language is viewed as a material entity, a material condition. In effect, the property of discourse is defined as the ability to understand statements, to elicit an immediate access to the body of already formulated statements and as the capacity to invest discourse on decisions, institutions and practices. If language is material and it can be turned into property, then it is also subject to a political economy of discourse. In every society discourse is controlled, selected, organized and redistributed in order to avert the power inherent in its materiality. To illustrate this notion it is pertinent to consider what happened to the Friar Francisco de la Cruz after the Spanish conquest of the Aztec Empire: he was burned at the stake in 1578 for expounding the idea that Mexican Indians were God's chosen people. There is also the nun-philosopher-poet Sor Juana Inéz de la Cruz, one of the great minds of colonial Mexico. This woman who has been credited with saving the colonial period from silence, died in 1695, shortly after church authorities forbade her to write anymore. Taken at random from Mexican history these examples reveal that

it is precisely the restrictions and prohibitions applied to words that manifest the power of language.[2]

A body of knowledge (e.g. psychiatry in the nineteenth century or Mexican philosophy in the twentieth century) appropriates the intellectual labor of major thinkers in the sense that it engenders certain positions which are then occupied by specific individuals. These positions (hereafter termed "subjective positions") are occupied according to the dictates of the political economy of discourse. This notion can be understood by recalling José Ortega y Gasset's contention that man's self or ego is neither material nor spiritual but instead, a task or a project. This ego-project, moreover, is not self-determined according to the individual's will since it imposes itself "as a necessity of being this or that particular self."[3] The necessity to which Ortega refers is imposed precisely by the political economy of knowledge. It follows then, that individuals are not at liberty to speak of anything at anytime. To speak against the rules of discourse, to speak the words of an emergent knowledge against an established paradigm, is to risk being declared mad, if not physical injury.

The subjective positions that Mexican philosophers are allowed to occupy will be ascertained from three major perspectives. The first perspective provides a chronological background in which, with reference to various domains, an individual is defined as a questioning, listening, seeing or observing subject. Secondly, the subjective position of the philosopher is defined by a) establishing the criteria of competence applied to the philosopher, b) the relationship between the philosopher and other philosophers, c) the characteristics that define the function of the philosopher in relation to society as a whole and d) the institutional sites which legitimize his statements. The final section deals with the subjective position that the philosopher can occupy in the information networks. Three corresponding questions can serve as a guide: Have Mexican philosophers been able to invest their discourse in decisions, institutions and practices? Has the power inherent in the materiality of their discourse been averted? Have these philosophers had immediate access to the body of already formulated statements?

I

It was noted that according to a certain *program of information* a particular individual becomes the *listening subject*. At the beginning of the twentieth century this program of information was rather gloomy. There was no interest in popular culture, the educated minority had no contact with the people, European philosophies were ostentateously imitated, there existed a sterile, almost pompous art and ignorance of the country's popular traditions. In the face of such a program of information a subjective position is created which functions as a vacuum that attracts intellectuals to a nationalist, anti-

materialist stand. Being nationalist, this position leads to a concern with the socio-economic realities of the country; but being anti-materialist as well, this position encouraged serious intellectual contradictions. Then, with respect to a *grid of explicit or implicit questions*, the individual becomes the *questioning subject*. The question of identity, which is ultimately tied to the emergence of philosophy of *lo mexicano* (that which is Mexican) becomes a major concern after the collapse of the Porfiriato (as the regime of Porfirio Diaz is known). "The intellectual then sees how the real Mexico, previously stuffed under a stiff collar and leggins, undresses before his eyes," writes Luis Villoro.[5] An emergent concern with the problem of identity leads in two directions: *indigenismo* and *hispano-americanismo*. Painters, musicians, and even architects attempt to derive inspiration from indigenous forms. There thus emerges a concern over the previous exclusion of the indigenous races and the announcement of projects to achieve their integration into the Mexican state. This particular feature is important because the myth of the indigenous serves in the post-Mexican Revolution period as a symbol of originality. The question of hispano-americanism, again, is a parallel concern, the assertion of the emergent knowledge against the universal claim of the European paradigm.

According to a *table of characteristic features* the individual occupies the position of the *seeing subject*. During the time of the Mexican Revolution the characteristics appear, as the Mexican philosopher José Vasconcelos indicates, "in the midst of fatigue and the confusion of our time." In the same work, *Indología*, he makes reference to the reason: ". . . it is not enough to imagine answers, since what is lacking is to improvise solutions. Improvisation is our calamity because it is our fatality. Life has rushed us. This is the continent of no waiting."[6] Similar characteristic features are perceived by other seeing subjects. The novel of the revolution, for example, does not emerge as "revolutionary", but rather as a narration, as a chronicle. Appropriately, in the midst of the rush of events, the Mexican poet José Juan Tablada introduces the haiku, the poetic formed designed to capture a vision, a poetic moment. It is no wonder that painting became the best form of expression of the times; the painter that best expressed the drama of the revolution, José Clement Orozco, also stated that *"la Revolución fue para mí el mas alegre y divertido de los carnavales"* (the Revolution was for me the most joyous and fun of all carnivals).[7] If the Revolution was "an explosion of reality and a groping search" as Paz states in *The Labyrinth of Solitude*, then the characteristic features will require that the philosopher, as a seeing subject, transform his philosophy into poetry. And that is precisely what Vasconcelos did: he considered philosophy poetry with a system.

After the denouement of the initial enthusiasm regarding the Mexican Revolution, the individual becomes the observing subject with respect to certain descriptive types. By the 1930's the members of the intellectual class,

the "generation that was sacrificed" as Alfonso Reyes used to call it, were in exile, in embassies, or in the bureaucracy. By the time Lazaro Cárdenas came to the Presidency, the intelligentsia was too fragmented to carry out the plans made the previous decade. If immediately after the Revolution the subjective positions were limited to a table of characteristic features about the new world of *lo mexicano* which are immediately described, inscribed, and transcribed into different forms of artistic expression, the observing subject, on the contrary, goes beyond mere features. The descriptive type according to which the *observing subject* is positioned now deals with the *mode of living* that world: the subject turns the gaze inward. Thus, in 1934, Samuel Ramos introduced his social psychoanalysis of the Mexican, in which he observes that Mexican culture had relied upon imitation of foreign cultural models and that these models are not adequate for Mexican reality.[8] This imitation of what is foreign, furthermore, indicates that the Mexican people suffer from an inferiority complex. The significance of his analysis lies in the theoretical shift from placing the blame for alienation of the Mexican on outside forces, to locating the origins of alienation within the Mexican. It now becomes necessary to discover the man who hides behind an attitude of imitation. Thus, Martín Luis Guzmán published *La Sombra del Caudillo*, which is the first novel to denounce barbarian tactics and political lies. Vasconcelos held a similar attitude in his autobiography, which began to appear in 1935. And, in later years, Rodolfo Usigli wrote *El gesticulador* (1934) which examines a social and individual behavior among Mexicans: the hiding behind a gesture or rhetoric. Also in painting there was a profound change. Beginning in 1934 the paintings of Orozco revealed the desire to an exorcism of the elements which alienate the Mexican: the empty word, the symbols of irrationality, the grotesque gesture, the circus of demagogues. They also indicated a solution: rip off the mask. This is most eloquently demonstrated in *The Catharsis*, the highest peak of tension expressed in Orozco's paintings.[9]

The observation of *lo mexicano* became more refined by 1950, a year which also saw the stabilization of the country and the formation of the paradoxical *Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI).* The treatment of philosophical themes and problems became then a program or a theory. Leopoldo Zea proposed to build an original culture and through it reach universal culture. This original philosophy would, accordingly, emerge in two forms: as a reflection on Mexican themes from the Mexican perspective and as a meditation upon universal themes from the same perspective. Thus, the History of Ideas in Mexico was constituted. Some of the studies included in this emergent discipline are those of Edmundo O'Gorman who traces the Idea of America in Western consciousness, and those of Emilio Uranga who attempts an analysis of *lo mexicano.* A similar approach is found in *Al filo del agua* by Agustín Yanez and *Pedro Páramo* by Juan Rulfo: these are novels that no longer limit themselves to description of events but, rather, conduct an

exploration of the Mexican psyche. In painting, Rufino Tamayo (who according to Lepoldo Zea, is racked by two national characteristics: unrest and anguish) explores the world of the unconscious encountering at times mythical elements.[10] By the middle of the century, the different descriptive types have taken the observing subject from a consideration of the subject's own psychological make up to the exploration of the universal:

> If we tear off those masks, if we open up, if, in brief, we face ourselves, we will begin to live and to really think. Nakedness and abandonment await us. There, in the open solitude transcendence also awaits us: the hands of other solitary beings. We are, for the first time in our history, contemporary of all men.[11]

These descriptive types which are directed toward the subject itself, have remained constant to some extent, but their very nature has limited them: far from becoming institutionalized, they were exercises in introspection, not in construction, criticism or creation.

According to contemporary Mexican thought it is not the Mexican who hides behind gestures and rhetoric: it is language itself. Thus, it is said that the renaissance features of the conquest hide the medieval impact of the colonization; the language of the enlightenment hides the retention of feudalism; the language of liberal positivism hides financial imperialism; the language of the Mexican Revolution hides the realities of counter-revolution. Consequently, at present,

> . . . our true language (perceived by Darío and Neruda, Reyes and Paz, Borges and Huidobro, Vallejo and Lezama, Lima, Cortázar and Carpentier) is in the process of discovering and creating itself and, in the same act of its discovery and creation, it places in check, revolutionarily, a whole economic, political, and social structure founded in a language that is vertically false.[12]

The political economy of language thus functions as a device to keep the subject away from the respective social, political and economic realities of the time.

II

In addition to the mystification of language, which blocks the realization of words into praxis, there is the manipulation of the status given (or denied) to Mexican philosophers in order to avert the material effect of their discourse. At this point a brief historical note is in order. At the request of president Benito Juárez, Gabino Barreda introduced the positivist philosophy of August Comte in 1867 with the expressed intention of providing a remedy for political anarchy. Barreda, one of the leading Mexican intellectuals of his time, believed that only a neutral science such as mathematics could provide a foundation for common agreement. Eventually, though, positivism became the official philosophy of the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz. On March 22, 1908, Justo Sierra, Mexican educator and political philosopher, delivered an address in honor of Barreda in which he dared question the "unquestionable" status of science and mathematics. It is said that the effect of this speech was like "an invisible crack, a small opening through which the outside air suddenly rushed into that rarefied chamber which, incapable of oxygenation, exploded like a bomb."[13] But it was on September 18, 1910, at Sierra's request, that the government reopened the University of Mexico (its predecessor, incidentally, was the Pontifical University of Mexico which antedates Harvard by eighty-five years). Two months later the Mexican Revolution signaled the end of the Porfiriato and with it the dominance of positivism in Mexican philosophy. The establishment of the *Escuela Nacional de Altos Estudios*, which later became the *Facultad de Filosofía y Letras*, resulted in the reinstatement of philosophy in state schools after more than seventy-five years. Before this event, philosophy proper was considered metaphysics and it had no place in the positivist Comtean vision of society.[14]

Once this institutional site was established, subjective positions emerged in which competence, in a general sense, was demonstrated by an adherence to, among others, the vitalism of Henri Bergson and the historicism of Wilhelm Dilthey. One of these subjective positions was adopted by Antonio Caso who was known as "jefe de la revolución filosófica" (chief of the philosophical revolution) and "maestro completo" (total teacher). Caso, appointed professor of philosophy after the revolt that overthrew Diaz, spent most of his life in one or another post within the university. However, once established, anti-positivism, in the form of the *filosofía de lo mexicano*, systematically excluded critical ideas. Thus, when president Lazaro Cárdenas introduced a law requiring support for socialist education, Caso opposed it. Cárdenas dismissed Caso but protests from students and intellectuals forced him to reverse his decision. Allegedly, the philosophy of *lo mexicano* did not allow for socialism or marxism for the same reason that it did not allow for positivism: it excluded a materialistic philosophy built on science. At the same

time, the discourse of *lo mexicano* had as a major premise the rule that no foreign ideas should be borrowed. There were to be no subjective positions for those who did not adhere to the paradigm of *lo mexicano*. For example the intellectual labor of Ricardo and Manuel Flores Magón, who espoused radical ideas such as marxism and anarcho-syndicalism, was eliminated. The Magon brothers were forced out of the country by the Diaz regime during the early stages of the Mexican Revolution; their statements made considerable impact, however, in the labor organizing of Mexicans (Chicanos) in the United States. Not so incidentally, Ricardo chose to spend his days in an American prison rather than accept a pardon which required him to admit that he had violated the law. Thus, the power of his words was averted. The overall effect of the criteria of competence set by the *filosofía de lo mexicano* was the exclusion of social criticism at a time of social revolution.

In relation to international philosophy, it is no secret that the subjective position occupied by Mexican philosophers is a subordinate one. Thus, one of the few but growing number of books written in English, has the following prologue:

> If the 'Good Neighbor Policy' were a fact rather than a political slogan or at best a pious wish, the life, work, and death of one of the great thinkers, writers, and teachers of the Western Hemisphere (Antonio Caso) could hardly have passed almost without being noticed in the Anglo-Saxon part of the American continent.[15]

José Gaos, Spanish philosopher exiled in Mexico, notes that not only are the names of Mexican philosophers excluded from the history of philosophy (i.e. Western European philosophy) but even the Mexicans themselves had accepted as a part of their intellectual self-evaluation, the ignorance of others. For example, according to Carlos Monsivais, Mexican philosophers move between snobbery and anti-intellectualism in their relation to other individuals. One formula is the belief that Mexican philosophy has now achieved intellectual maturity or a cosmopolitan level; the other is a rejection of rigorous knowledge on the ground that it is too "bookish", not sufficiently vital or intuitive.[16] According to him, this was a way of compensating for their lack of rigorous training. A similar judgement is expressed by another Latin American thinker, namely, that in Latin America "methodical explanation is substituted by emotional explosions," or "philosophy is reduced to the exercise of verbal ingenuities or a reclaim based on the arguments of purely instinctive beliefs."[17] But these associations depend on the assumption that man is free to speak of anything at anytime. When philosophical discourse is viewed as what it *actually* is — a political economy of language — one is

inclined to agree with Risieri Frondizi, the Argentinian philosopher who stated:

> We can offer an inexhaustible source of emotion, a bleeding humanity, men who have not become philosophers because life has not let them.[18]

More specifically, the questioning of a paradigm involves, necessarily, the use of intuition and faith. To clarify this point it helps to recall Kuhn's notion that in the period between paradigms scientific convictions are suspended and adherence to a particular paradigm is based on faith, which is to say intuition. This illustrates what happens to Mexican philosophers who question and confront the European paradigm. This confrontation creates an impossible situation for the Mexican philosopher. In questioning the European paradigm Mexican philosophers resort to intuition but in doing so they are excluded from the position of philosopher — a position which is necessary for them to "validly" question the paradigm. So if the same philosopher is faithful to the rules of the European discourse, he must exclude his own perception of the problematic. And, again, if he is faithful to his perception of the problematic he is no longer considered a "legitimate" philosopher. Chicano scholars, incidentally, find themselves in a similar position when, in their search for adequate approaches to the solution of socio-economic problems of the Chicano population, they challenge the traditional disciplines in which they have been trained.

Alfonso Reyes, the most cosmopolitan of all the Mexican thinkers makes the following observation regarding the formative years in the life of intellectuals:

> The European writer is born as if in the highest floor of the Eiffel tower. A small effort of a few meters, and he excels over the mental peaks. The (Latin) American is born as if in the region of the central fire (the core of the Earth). After a colossal effort, to which contributes an exacerbated vitality, that almost resembles genius, he is barely able to peep out of the surface of the ground.[19]

Consequently, claims Reyes, this experience allows the Latin American to understand intellectual labor "as a public service and civilizing duty." In Mexico as in the rest of Latin America intellectuals play a very important role in the life of the nation. In effect, the relations among the intellectual and groups such as the state or its representatives are characterized by an implicit

assumption that the role of the state is to educate and that the task of the intellectual is to guide the country. One of the consequences of this event is that there has been up to recent times, a symbiotic relationship between state representatives and intellectuals. At times this subjective position may involve some obvious contradictions: Antonio Caso, for example, was a member of the anti-positivist *Ateneo de la juventud* and at the same time director of the Club Reelccionista of Mexico City which had as its purpose the reelection of Diaz and Corral in 1910; another member of the *Ateneo*, Alfonso Reyes, was active after 1900 in promoting the political interests of his father, the Porfirian General Bernardo Reyes. A prototype of the scholar-activist was the Mexican philosopher José Vasconcelos who, in 1929, ran for president against Pascual Ortiz Rubio. On the other hand, there are also radical intellectuals such as Camilo Arriaga who, having studied Proudhon, Marx, Engels, and Bakunin, joined forces with the anarchists Antonio Diaz Soto Y Gama and Ricardo Flores Magón in their struggle against the *Porfiriato.*[20] More recently, the president of the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México*, Javier Baros Sierra, had previously occupied the position of Secretary of State; equally, Enrique Gonzalez Pedrero, chairman of political and social sciences was later nominated for senator of his state by the ever-ruling Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI).[21]

The image of the activist-scholar who sees intellectual labor as a public service is valued by Mexican and Chicano intellectuals. However, the student movement in Mexico as well as some members of the intelligentsia have denounced the inconsistencies between the promises and the realities of the present situation. Of course this challenge to the political economy of language does not take place without paying a heavy price in human lives and suffering, as indicated by the 1968 massacre at Tlatelolco.[22] The role that the intellectual must play in society is now denounced because it allows and, in fact, encourages the intervention of outside interests (e.g. the governing elites) in the affairs of the university. The protests of students, workers and the peasants who support them, however, has produced paradoxical results regarding the appropriation of language. Considering that the regime of Porfirio Diaz tried to establish a positivist society led by scientists, and considering also that one of the projects was to somehow alter what was believed to be the "anomalous" mind of the common Mexican, it is important to note that in response to student protests president Luis Echeverría increased subsidies for the support of schools that emphasize scientific principles.[23] Then, in his 1974 State of the Union Address, echoing the early twentieth century positivists, Echeverría expressed his intention to "change the mental structures of the Mexican people." Understandably, the disciplines in most demand are those which respond to the requirements of an industrialized country. Most Mexican students enroll in the schools of medicine, the National School of Business and Administration and the School

of Engineering while the Schools of Plastic Arts, Music and the School of Philosophy and Letters experience the least attendance. Thus, the designs of the *cientificos*, the leading intellectuals of the Diaz regime, are being continued by their historical antagonists, the heirs of the Mexican Revolution. The result is, of course, the same: the appropriation of language, the stifling of criticism.

As a discipline, philosophy is by no means in trouble in Mexico. The philosophical discourse that specifically lacks an institutional site is the philosophy of *lo mexicano*. Luis Villoro, a contemporary Mexican historian and philosopher, notes in his "*Perspectivas de la filosofía en México para 1980*,"[24] that Mexican youth does not care for such "ideological" philosophy; youth demonstrates rather an interest in a more technical and scientific philosophy as well as a tendency towards Marxism. Just as Gabino Barreda once considered positivism a neutral science with which to correct the problems of the country, technical philosophy is now viewed as having a certain neutrality. Analytical philosophy, moreover, "serves to critique, it serves as a terrible weapon to unmask the mystifying ideologies. This is the greatness of philosophy, its Socratic mission."[25] Similarly, Marxism is perceived as an answer to the problems of social and political sciences and philosophy of history "just as long as it reaches a more rigorous precision in its analysis," just as long as it becomes more "scientific." Villoro, then, sees the desired institutional site emerging by 1980:

> (By) 1980 the genuine philosophical production will not be the property of a few isolated thinkers anymore but of an incipient professional community that will constitute itself as a school.[26]

A genuine or authentic philosophy is for Villoro one that does not confuse cultural preoccupations with the main philosophical task, "although it will be open to external influences." So, the philosophical discourse of *lo mexicano* which appropriated the intellectual production of Mexican thinkers for half a century has now come to an end, and a new paradigm — a more scientific discourse — has replaced it.

III

It is now pertinent to consider the subjective positions available for Mexican philosophers in the information network. One of the key positions in this network is occupied by José Gaos, a philosopher who is not Mexican but has done as much as any Mexican to advance the philosophy of *lo mexicano*

Thus, from his seminar for the Study of Thought in the Spanish-Speaking Countries have come the best works on the history of Hispanic American ideas: Leopoldo Zea, *(El positivismo en México* and *Apogéo y decadencia del positivismo en México)*, Luis Villoro, *(Los grandes momemtos del indigenismo en México)*, Bernabé Navarro *(La introducción de la filosofía moderna en México)*, Monelisa Lina Perez-Marchand, *(Dos estapas ideologicas del siglo XVIII)*, Olga Victoria Quiroz Martínez *(La introducción de la filosofía moderna en España)*, Vera Yamuni *(Concepto e imagenes en pensadores de lengua española)*, Francisco López Cámara, *(La génesis de la concienca liberal en México)*, and Carmen Rovira *(Eclecticos portugueses del siglo XVIII)*. Since his arrival in México, José Gaos, a disciple of José Ortega y Gasset, was provided with the resources both material and human necessary to continue his work. He was always grateful to Lazaro Cárdenas, the Mexican president at the time (1939) as well as to prominent intellectuals (Antonio Caso, Alfonso Reyes, Daniel Cosío Villegas, Jesús Silva Herzog) who made it possible for him to work at institutions such as the *Facultad de Filosofía y Letras* of the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México*, the *Casa de España en México* (founded by the president exclusively for the exiled Spaniards which later became *El Colegio de México*), the *Fondo de Cultura Económica*, *Cuadernos Americanos* and others.[27]

It is understandable, then, that his presence was considered "a sober catalyst" within the intellectual climate in which the teaching of philosophy was understood as "a more or less literary rhetoric among some, as a passionate defense of a doctrine and unceasing polemic for others, and as a demonstration of a lack of rigour and information for almost everyone."[28] Before the arrival of Gaos, this intellectual situation had existed for almost a decade. For example, Samuel Ramos notes:

> An intellectual generation which began to act publicly between 1925 and 1930 felt dissatisfied with the philosophical romaticism of Caso and Vasconcelos. After a critical revision of their doctrines, they found their anti-intellectualism groundless, but they did not wish to return to classical rationalism. In this perplexity, the books of José Ortega y Gasset began to arrive in Mexico . . .[29]

No doubt the *Revista de Occidente*, edited by Ortega in 1922, played a large role in alleviating this dissatisfaction. At any rate, Gaos enjoyed a reputation as a disciple of Ortega, translator of several philosophical texts published by the *Revista de Occidente*, professor of philosophy in several universities in Spain and once rector of the University of Madrid.

Once Gaos' important status in the information network is understood it is

necessary to consider his role in the teaching of philosophy. He considered his task to be that of a commentator rather than a critic: he would choose a work and would manipulate it as if it were a rare work of art, a vase that must be described in the most insignificant detail, an ancient document to be deciphered. The emphasis lay on the material composition of the book, (e.g., its organization in sections, chapters, paragraphs, sentences) and the appearance of an idea at a particular section and its emergence in a later section.[30] For Gaos, the only reality is the act of thought, and such an act can be communicated only through a verbal expression; these ideas point to a present concern of philosophy, namely linguistics and conceptual analysis, but given Gaos' treatment, they served to exclude a critical analysis of the work. In the atmosphere of rhetoric and passionate defense of ideas, however, his method was indeed a virtue: the emphasis on the reading of works in the original language, the utilization of the right sources, the historical erudition, the use of good editions and commentaries. In some cases these methods, however, served as a deterrent to learning, like the occasion when some students asked him to teach a course on Marx, and Gaos announced that the works would be read in German; no one showed up for the class.[31]

Given Gaos' key position in the information network it is important to note that his work is characterized by a lack of exchange of information with other individuals or professional bodies. Thus, his logical-semantic studies were developed and maintained within the boundaries of Husserl's *Logical Investigations.* When Russel and Wittgenstein, and analytical philosophy in general, developed in another direction, Gaos continued within the phenomenological tradition. As Alejandro Rossi tragically put it; "The child had aged and the father was not aware of it."[32] The subjective position that Gaos occupied disappeared with the death of the philosophy of *lo mexicano* and its two main supportive statements: 1) the concern with the circumstance, the identity of the national entity: and 2) the historicist discursive practice that considers man an empirico-transcendental synthesis, and which leads to the simultaneous attempt to separate the empirical and the transcendental while being directed at both.

Gaos' preoccupation with the relation between the concept and its verbal formulation points to a contemporary concern with the role of language; a preoccupation that has emerged in the form of *la nueva novela* in Latin America. Although Mexican and Chicano intellectuals are forced, as it were, to speak the language required by a paradigm (philosophy and social science respectively) their concern lies in a problematic that transcends the paradigm. Their true interest seems to be with "the correction of a moral injustice," to use Gaos' ethical tone, but given the conditions imposed by the political economy of language, their statements cannot be invested in decisions, institutions or practices. Furthermore, for Gaos the historical-spiritual sciences (socio-cultural or what Foucault calls the human sciences) which deal with the

concrete, cannot reach the intersubjectivity of the *a priori* statements. This situation cannot be resolved, according to Gaos, because the only recourse, mathematization, would never reach the concrete matter of knowledge, only the abstract form of the object. For Gaos, therefore, philosophy and history cannot be reduced; but even though they are not "universally valid, or the same truth for everyone, they have genuine validity."[33] Unlike the problem of identity and historicism, the concern with the appropriation of language as a form of oppression and the concern with the concrete matter of knowledge have survived the death of the philosophy of *lo mexicano*.

It can now be asserted that the philosophy of *lo mexicano* has served as an opium in the sense that it has appropriated the intellectual labor of Mexican thinkers, thus averting their impact on the material conditions of the country. This appropriation has been determined by subjective positions typified by an avoidance of critical thought, rejection of foreign ideas, low status in international academic circles, a symbiotic relationship with the government, lack of institutional support and isolation from current philosophical practices. Nevertheless, while philosophical discourse was steered away from the Mexican material condition, it dealt with a problematic that has emerged in post-industrial societies. Thus, Gaos' insistence that the historical-philosophical sciences cannot be universally valid because they must deal with the concrete matter of knowledge is, given his status in the information network, symptomatic of a prophetic element in the philosophy of *lo mexicano*.

For more than three generations Mexican philosophers, social theorists and critics have been developing a political and intellectual critique of technocracy, a critique which has surfaced only recently in North America. In his book, *The Polarity of Mexican Thought*, Weinstein notes:

> Their dissatisfaction with technocratic materialism and their concern to make a distinctively moral contribution to world civilization make them forbearers of discontented intellectuals throughout the world who are frustrated by mechanistic and exploitative organizations.[34]

The philosophy of *lo mexicano* serves as an example of the subtle processes through which authority and power impose themselves on the consciousness of individuals. As Daniel Cosio Villegas, a noted Mexican intellectual, admits, given the power of the Mexican government coupled with the general adherence to the myth-dogma of the Mexican Revolution, the intellectual is excluded from participation in political criticism. "Logically," he argues, "the Mexican intellectual, nor any other rational being, enjoys being a martyr or a

preacher in the desert."[35] At the same time, the philosophy of *lo mexicano* is relevant to contemporary concerns about the increased mechanization of life. To conclude, a statement by Michael Weinstein:

> The Mexican antipositivists deserve a hearing from contemporary intellectuals sensitive to the crises of freedom and honest human relations in the complex organizations of today. Cultural chauvinism, primarily a belief that Mexicans have not created serious and original philosophy should not stand in the way of such a hearing. If it does, the losers will not be the Mexicans but ourselves.[36]

Departmento de Estudios Chicanos
Loyola Marymount University
Los Angeles, California

Notes

1. See Michael A. Weinstein, *The Polarity of Mexican thought: Instrumentalism and Finalism* University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976.
2. The studies of the French scholar Michel Foucault on the emergence and development of specific bodies of knowledge such as psychiatry (*Madness and Civilization*) and medicine (*The Birth of the Clinic*) as well as his attempt at a methodology (*The Archaeology of Knowledge*) have been useful in this study.
3. *Goya* Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1966, third edition, pp. 71-79 (my translation).
4. To minimize repetitiveness "political economy of language" and "paradigm" will be used interchangeably to mean the distribution of socially and politically accepted knowledge. These terms are contrasted with an "emergent knowledge" and that is the intellectual labor that has not been accepted or legitimized by the socio-political structures.
5. "La cultura mexicana de 1910 a 1960", *Historia Mexicana* (October-December, 1960), p. 200.
6. *Indología*. Barcelona: Agencia Mundial de Libreria, 1927, p. 202.
7. Quoted in Villoro's "La Cultura Mexicana de 1910 a 1960," p. 203.
8. It is worth noting that almost simultaneously the first editions of two other significant essays in Latin American man and culture were published: Gilberto Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves* (Brazil); Ezequiel Martinez Estrada, *X-Ray of the Pampa* (Argentina); *El Perfil del Hombre y la Cultura an México*, México: Impresa Mundial, 1934. It suggests the possible cultural and geographical extension of specific discursive practices.
9. Leopoldo Castedo, *A History of Latin America Art and Architecture,* tr. and ed. by Phylis Freeman, New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969, p. 228.
10. Ibid. p. 235.
11. Octavio Paz, *El laberinto de la soledad* México: Cuadernos Mexicanos, 1950, p. 192 (my translation).
12. Carlos Fuentes, *La nueva novela hispanoamericana.* México: Cuadernos de Joaquín Montez, 1974, pp. 94-95 (my translation).
13. Alfonso Reyes, *Pasado immediato y otros ensayos*, México: Colegio de Mexico, 1941, p. 14.
14. Patrick Romanell, *The Making of the Mexican Mind*, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1971, second edition, p. 65.

15. John Haddox, *Antonio Caso, Philosopher of Mexico*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971.
16. Carlos Monsivais, "Clasismo y novela", *Latin American Perspectives*, Summer, 1975, p. 178.
17. Eurylo Cannabrava, "Present Tendencies in Latin American Philosophy, *The Journal of Philosophy* (March 3, 1949), p. 117.
18. "Tipo de unidad y diferencia entre el filosofar en Latino América y Norte América," *Filosofía y Letras* (April-June) 1950, p. 377 (my translation).
19. *Ultima Tule*, México: Imprenta universitaria, 1942, pp. 138-139.
20. William Raat "Ideas and Society In Don Porfirio's México," *The Americas* July, 1973, pp. 34-35.
21. Alfonso Pulle-Goyry, "El movimiento estudiantil en México después de 1968," paper presented at "Popular Struggles in Mexico and the U.S. Southwest" conference at California State University, Los Angeles, February 17-19, 1977.
22. Elene Poniatowska, *La noche de Tlatelolco*, México: Biblioteca Era, 1971, second edition.
23. Pulle-Goyry, "El movimiento estudiantil."
24. *El perfil de México en 1980*, México: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, S.A., and the Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales, UNAM, 1974.
25. Ibid. pp. 614-617, passim.
26. Ibid, p. 617.
27. Jose Gaos, *Antología del pensamiento de lengua española de la edad contemporanea*, México: Editorial Seneca, 1945.
28. Luis Villoro, "Dos notas sobre Gaos," *Revista de la Universidad de México* (May) 1970, p. 8.
29. *Historia de la filosofía en México*, México: Imprenta Universitaria, 1943. p. 149, (my translation).
30. Alejandro Rossi, "Una imagen de Gaos," p. 14.
31. Justino Fernández, "Los cursos del doctor José Gaos," *Revista de la Universidad de México*, (May), 1970, p. 5.
32. "Una imagen de Gaos", *Revista de la Universidad de México* (May) 1971, p. 16.
33. José Gaos, *Confesiones profesionales*, México: Tezontle, 1958, p. 142.
34. Weinstein, *The Polarity of Mexican Thought*, p. 1.
35. Stanley R. Ross, "La protesta de los intelectuales ante México y su revolución," *Historia Mexicana* (January-March) 1977, p. 431.
36. Weinstein, *The Polarity of Mexican Thought*, pp. 1-2.

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MARGINALITY AND THE RECOVERY OF HISTORY: ON LEOPOLDO ZEA

Raymond A. Rocco

Leopoldo Zea is one of Mexico's most prolific and influential social philosophers.[1] While almost unknown in North American intellectual circles, Zea's philosophical work includes more than thirty books, consisting, in part, of a two-volume analysis of representative thinkers in Western philosophy and two classic treatises on positivism in Mexico — *The Rise and Fall of Positivism in Mexico* and *Positivism in Mexico.*[2]

Over a long and distinguished intellectual career, Zea's thought has been motivated by the belief that the most appropriate task of Mexican philosophy is to provide a new, and more evocative, interpretation of the human condition in Latin America. Put specifically but eloquently, Zea's work represents a continuing and sustained response to the question: "What is the relationship among philosophy, history and America"? Zea's reflections on the dynamic tensions which characterize the relationship of philosophy to its historical circumstance represent a reconciliation of two traditions of thought. On the one hand, Zea's ontology and epistemology reflect an important European influence — from Ortega's historicism is derived an appreciation of philosophy in its historical circumstance; from Mannheim's sociology of knowledge is adopted a dialectic of ideas and concrete interests; and from Sartre, there is taken a preoccupation with the values of responsibility and freedom.[3] On the other hand, Zea has been most influenced by that tradition of Latin American thinkers who break with Europe in order to develop an authentic Latin American image of history — José Marti, José Enrique Rodo, José Vasconcelos, Alfonso Reyes, Manuel Ugarte, Manuel Prada, Samuel Ramos and Antonio Caso. Together with the early influence of José Gaos, Caso's is a haunting presence in Zea's thought. It is from Caso that Zea adopts the basic axiological principle of *la persona*, the integrity and dignity of whom is to be the normative standard by which the historical circumstance may be judged. Over and again, Zea returns in his writing to the problem of establishing an active mediation between philosophy and history, a mediation which is aimed at the liberation of *la persona*, at the emancipation, that is, of Latin America from colonial domination.

Philosophy, History and America

For Zea, philosophy is an "instrument" to know a concrete, substantial reality.[4] The "something" which philosophy confronts is human action and our consciousness of it, the primary components of history. All philosophy is

of and *in* history; it is always written from a certain angle of vision, from a particular historical circumstance. But if all philosophy is unavoidedly political, is all thought about history, about the human situation, philosophical? With Gramsci, Zea proposes that while all reflection about the human condition contains a philosophical element, it is not thereby philosophy. In Zea's thought, philosophy refers to that type of self-conscious inquiry which provides a systematic and general framework of concepts, a set of propositions, for interpreting the human reality. In the philosophical regime, concepts are to be interlinked in such a way that they provide the basis for interpreting the significance of previously isolated historical phenomena. Yet is this conception of philosophy not similar to the classical position which would have it that the philosophical utterance is *universally valid.* In opposition to this viewpoint, Zea denies the imminent universal validity of philosophy, holding, instead, that philosophy's task is to interrogate the concreteness of historical experience. While the local is the point-of-departure, and not the goal of philosophy which is, after all, simply to philosophize, it does provide the "angle of vision" from which philosophy is always developed. To say that philosophy "must" confront historical concreteness is to use "must" in the sense of "inevitable". Zea summarizes his attitude towards the birth of philosophy as follows: "What then is our *situation* from the point of view of what we are? What is our *being*? Here is the task for philosophy. From the response to this question will rise our search for [American] philosophy".[5] For philosophy to be philosophy it must achieve self-consciousness; thought which does not recognize its own circumstances does not reach self-consciousness. Although philosophy may not always reflect on its circumstances, it must, nevertheless, reflect its historical experience. But if philosophical inquiry is perspectival rather than definitive, how is it to be evaluated? How, in other words, is Zea to overcome the dilemna of historicism: if all philosophy is true only in a relative sense, then one's own philosophical perspective must be valid only for a given circumstance? Zea would respond to the historcist dilemna by noting that all individuals, including the philosopher, are born into circumstances not of their own making. But to live is to act and through action we are committed. Our circumstances, by virtue of existence, oblige us to take a position. We are then presented with possible choices by the human situation. Death is the only exit from choice. But choice of a path makes us responsible for our actions, to others as well as to ourselves, for existence is inherently social. Commitment and responsibility are thus unavoidable. And, of course, it is only in a condition of freedom that authentic responsibility can be realized. The philosopher's task is, in providing an interpretation of the human condition, to assume responsibility for this interpretation, for its strategies and proposals, and for the consequences which follow from acting on it.[6]

The concepts of commitment, responsibility and freedom have as their common reference the dignity, the integrity and welfare of "the person". The realization of the value of "la persona" is the normative possibility of all historical action. Zea argues that there is an ultimate value in history and that is history itself, or existence, for without existence [which means the existence of the person] there can be nothing else. But existence is inherently co-existence: there can be no history of "one", only of one among and within the many. This is the *condition* of existence. The principle of life, then, must be taken as a given of history for without it, all the rest is nonsense. All history *presumes* the principle of life, which, for Zea, means the life of each person. Thus philosophies *can* be evaluated in terms of whether and to what extent they have self-consciously assumed their commitment, have established responsibility for their vision, and promoted freedom. The reference for all these, the evaluative standards for each, is the extent to which they in turn have promoted the dignity, welfare, and integrity of the person. Who is to judge this? Zea answers: the community of which one is part. Philosophy must submit to the judgment of the community.[7]

Domination, Philosophy and the Latin American Situation

If philosophy is a response to the historical circumstance what then has been the situation in America, particularly in Latin America? Zea states that "the philosophical-historical interpretation of the relation that, from the cultural point of view, Latin America has had with Europe or the Occident is what will provide the origin of a philosophy which is American".[8] But what has been the form of this interpretation? Zea argues that the different accountings of this relationship must be analyzed with regard to their historical development, and for this the history of philosophical ideas in Latin America must be placed in context. In Latin America, the history of ideas is opposed to that which has developed in the *European* experience. In the European idiom, the history of ideas is of the making of the European self, of the absorption and assimilation of philosophical tendencies around the creation of a distinct Euro-centered history. The history of European philosophy is an ongoing dialectic among the masters.

But in Latin America, the philosophical situation has been quite different. Until late in the nineteenth century, the history of ideas in Latin America was preoccupied with understanding the European influence — under the regimes of Platonism, Thomism, historicism — *in* Latin America; for none of these reflect the American reality. For Zea, this amounts to a history of thought and not of philosophy because philosophy is an original expression of the historical circumstance. While European philosophy might be envisioned as proceeding dialectically through stages of assimilation and absorption, the history of Latin American thought proceeds by the *juxtapositioning* of ideas. In

Latin American thought, adaptation took place but little absorption.[9] The result was an accumulation of problems, not solutions. In Zea's viewpoint, each stage of Latin American history was denied by succeeding generations of thinkers, rather than being accepted as *having been*, having existed as the context from which the present reality developed. In other words, Zea argues that Latin American thought tends to reflect its circumstance, but not *on* them. Latin American thinkers refused to accept their history, their circumstances. They attempted to ignore the "backwardness" of their societies as compared to Europe. For Zea, it is only with the development in the twentieth century of an awareness of dependency and marginality in Latin America that an authentic philosophy emerges. In a short book entitled *America Philosophy as Simply Philosophy*, Zea emphasizes that for a good deal of its history, there was no distinctive Latin American philosophy. The authenticity of Latin American philosophy develops when it begins to assess its circumstances from the perspective of the colonized, when it becomes self-conscious of the dependency relation. And with the emergence of an authentic Latin American philosophical voice comes an understanding that the reality of American is not European, that philosophy in Latin America must find its own way. For Zea, to write a history of the dependency relationship is really to contribute to a global philosophical project.[10] The philosophy of the history of the dependency relation is the opposite vision of a philosophy of history of domination; the reality is the same but the angle of vision, what it means for the dependent and the dominant, is quite different.

University of California,
Los Angeles

Notes

1. Leopoldo Aguilar Zea, like his working-class parents before him, was born in Mexico City on June 30th, 1912, two years after the Mexican Revolution began. He received all of his formal education in the Capitol, finally attending the *Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico* (UNAM) and receiving a bachelor's degree in 1936. He subsequently divided his time between the study of law and philosophy. With the assistance of José Guasi, Zea worked for his master's degree from 1938 to 1942, and received a doctorate in philosophy and letters in 1943. Both his master's thesis, *Positivism in Mexico,* and his doctoral dissertation, *The Rise and Fall of Positivism in Mexico*, were subsequently published and have become standard works in the study of Mexican philosophy, history and the social sciences. After holding temporary positions in several Mexican universities, in 1944 Zea was appointed to replace one of Mexico's leading intellectual figures, Antonio Caso, upon his retirement. Zea was appointed Professor of Philosophy of History on the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters at UNAM, a position Zea has now held for thirty-seven years. He has also served as the director of that department as well as of the Center of Latin-American Studies, focusing its energies on the History of Ideas in Latin America. In 1947, Zea was appointed to direct the work of the Committee on the History of Ideas in America whose principal task it has been to prepare and publish a History of Ideas of each nation in America. The first books appeared in 1956 and new works continue to be published periodically. The original task is now nearly completed but the committee's work is now focused on updating its earlier publications. The list of

honors and awards bestowed on Zea in recognition of his efforts and accomplishments are considerable to say the least, and certainly too long to include here. However, some of the more significant include his being granted the highest awards of the governments of Italy, Yugoslavia, Peru, Mexico, including membership in the French Legion of Honor. He has also served as a cultural envoy of the Mexican government, and has been the founder and director in universities in many countries. He was invited, for example, at the urging of Arnold Toynbee, to lecture at Oxford, France (Sorbonne), Germany, Italy, various African states, several in the United States, and, of course, many in Latin America have invited Zea to speak to their faculties. Zea's work is very broad in its scope and includes a two-volume analysis of the major figures in western philosophy, a two-volume presentation and critique of Latin-American philosophy, and his two books on positivism in Mexico are considered classics in the area of the sociology of knowledge. He has published thirty-one books (and another in press), thirty-three artícles in Mexico and an additional thirty prepared for English, French, or Italian scholarly publications. However, there is a basic continuity in Zea's work based on the use of the same themes and concepts in his analysis of different issues and concerns. This analysis is motivated by his belief that a new interpretation of the form and substance of the human condition in America is the appropriate task of American philosophy. And Zea's analysis is not isolated for it is part of the broader effort of a relatively small number of philosophers in different countries and of different orientations, who have concluded that the traditional philosophic frameworks cannot provide the understanding they seek. Thus, it is important to understand that while not part of the mainstream of contemporary thought, Zea's efforts are not simply idiosyncratic.

All of the information on Zea's background was obtained in several personal interviews with him during the month of February, 1978, in Mexico City. I wish to express my gratitude to Vice- Chancellor Wilson of UCLA for providing a grant to travel to Mexico for these interviews. A fellowship provided by the National Chicano Council on Higher Education has made this research possible by allowing me to devote the academic year 1977-78 to a broader study of Zea's work.

2. Zea's more important works are: *El Positivismo en México*, Tercera Edición, Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económia, 1968; *Ensayos sobre Filosofía en la Historia,* Mexico: Stylo, 1947; *Dos Etapas del Pensamiento en Hispanoamerica,* Mexico: El Colegio de México, 1949; *La Filosofía como Compromiso,* Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1952; América como Conciencia, Mexico: Cuadernos Americanos, 1953; *America en la Historia,* Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1957; *La Filosofía Americana como Filosofía sin Más,* Mexico: Siglo XXI, 1969; *Dialéctica de la Conciencia Americana,* Mexico: Editorial Alianza, 1975. I was fortunate enough to obtain the manuscript of Zea's latest work which should be published soon, entitled *Filosofía de la Historia Americana.* In this work Zea has brought together his basic themes and attempted to synthesize them. Since the pages of the manuscript will not correspond to the pages of the book, my references to this work will list the chapter and section where the reference is to be found. Two excellent commentaries on Zea's work are to be found in Abelardo Villegas, *La Filosofía de lo Mexicano,* Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1960, and Michael Weinstein, *The Polarity of Mexican Thought,* University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976.
3. Zea's references to Ortega and Mannheim can be found in *En Torno a Una Filosofía Americana,* México: El Colegio de México; for discussions of Sarte, see: *La Filosofía Como Compromiso* and *La Filosofía Americana como Filosofía sin Más.*
4. The clearest statement of Zea's conception of philosophy is contained in the first essay in *La Filosofía Como Compromiso.* See also *America Como Conciencia,* pp. 13-21, and *La Conciencia del Hombre en la Filosofía,* México: Imprenta Universitaria, 1953, pp. 11-32.
5. *La Filosofía Como Compromiso,* p. 37.
6. The three concepts are discussed in the first essay of *La Filosofía Como Compromiso.*
7. Some idea of Zea's notion of community can be gathered from his discussion in the first two chapters of *El Positivismo en México,* but it is not very clearly developed.
8. *Filosofía de la Historia Americana*, Introduction, Section 1. The following discussion refers to this entire chapter.

9. Zea discussed the situation of America in many works. The most extensive analyses are found in *America como Conciencia, Esencia de lo Americano*, and *Dos Etapas Del Pensamiento en Hispanoamerica*, Mexico: El Colegio de México, 1949. The relationship with Europe is dealt with in *América en la Conciencia de Europa*, Mexico: Los Presentes, 1955.
10. For Zea's fullest account of dependency, see *Dependencia y liberación en la cultura Latino Americana*, Mexico: Cuadernos de Joaquin Mortiz, 1974.
    An excellent discussion of Catholic ideology as applied to Latin America is contained in *America en la Historia*, ch. 9. For an analysis of the Occidential Colonizer, see *El Occidente y la Conciencia de Mexico*, México: Porrua y Obregon, 1953.

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INTRODUCTION TO ANTONIO CASO'S "THE CONCEPT OF UNIVERSAL HISTORY"

Antonio Caso's *The Concept of Universal History*, a selection from which follows this introduction, was first published in 1923 and is representative of Mexican philosophy in its Golden Age and of Caso's mature thought. Eduardo García Máynez, who belongs to the generation whose members were taught by Caso, remarks that for the period between the two World Wars Caso was "the spiritual leader of Mexican youth." According to García Máynez, "when we were young we found in him not only a master who gave us his wisdom generously, but a philosopher whose life equalled his thought and who made of his conduct a living paradigm of morality."[1] Caso, then, was an integral thinker, as the great philosophers in the Hispanic tradition, such as the Argentinian Alejandro Korn, the Uruguayan Carlos Vaz Ferreira, and the Spaniard Miguel de Unamuno, have striven and often have succeeded to be. Alfonso Reyes notes that Caso's vast knowledge of philosophical ideas and the logical strength with which he expressed and organized that knowledge made his university teaching "the pride of our academic world."

Caso is representative in the sense in which Ralph Waldo Emerson used the term "representative man;" he is the best and most complete expression of a form of life: the *pensador* of the Revolutionary era. *The Concept of Universal History* reads more like a lecture than a philosophical treatise, a stylistic characteristic which marked Mexican philosophy of the Golden Age. Caso and his great colleague José Vasconcelos did not, in accord with the integral tendency of their projects, separate education from investigation. Caso, in particular, was known to be a brilliant lecturer, who in his courses on the history of philosophy would enter into the formative intuition of each system successively and make old doctrines come alive as though they were being expressed by those who first enunciated them. He exemplified in practice, then, the "universal sympathy" and "intellectual love" which he defends in *The Concept of Universal History*. This work itself shows evidence of that sympathy. The first part of it presents with vigor and passion the case for history's inferiority to the sciences, but then the argument is abruptly reversed and the claims of history to autonomy and dignity are even more powerfully defended. The ultimate aim of the work is to put each form of spiritual activity in its proper place and within the bounds fixed for it by rational reflection. Even philosophy must function within the limits set by intuition, a requirement which makes Caso's critical project similar to Kant's task of providing for the self-limitation of reason.

Reyes says, the "new truths" of European and North American thought to the Mexican intellectual world. These "new truths" were primarily those contained in the vitalistic revolt against idealism and positivism, particularly

as expressed by Henri Bergson and William James. But as the selection to follow shows clearly, Arthur Schopenhauer's voluntarism and the metaphysics of Plato and Aristotle were also essential to Mexican philosophy in its Golden Age.

Caso's existential ontology is nowhere more evident than in *The Concept of Universal History*. Making his contribution to the debate, which is still lively in our own time, over the proper definitions of and relations among the various forms of inquiry, Caso defends the autonomy of both philosophy and history from the natural sciences and from one another. The essence of the defense is that philosophy and history touch aspects of Being which cannot be conceptualized, but can only be grasped by intuition. The sciences live within a conceptual medium, midway between the philosophical intuition of ineffable first principles and the historical intuition of irreducible concrete and unique individuals. The concepts of natural science are abstractions which allow us to manipulate things around us with relative success, but do not give us contact with reality. The intuitions grounding philosophy and history are diverse, leading Caso to a dualism which is only resolved in the deeds of the living person. Philosophy's intuition is ultimately mystical and yields a pervasive Being which is too elusive and omnipresent to be grasped by concepts, whereas history's intuition is ultimately aesthetic and yields an utterly unique individual which is too rich to be exhausted by concepts. Both the ineffable and the irreducible, then, are too great to be conceptualized, but in different ways: The first is too pervasive and the second too distinctive. Caso installs science and the arts squarely between the ineffable and the individual, as the two middle corners of a diamond. History, at the bottom corner, touches particularity and then alludes to it in its descriptions; philosophy, at the top corner, touches universality and evokes it in its argumentation. From history's viewpoint everything, including physical entities, is historical, because for it reality is concrete individuality. Hence, Caso's Universal History is universal in the strictest sense.

Caso's dualism is symbolized by his striking use of Mexican national imagery in which philosophy is depicted as the eagle and history as the serpent. The eagle soars above the land, gaining some freedom from the spirit of gravity, but failing to discern the complexity of individual beings. The serpent crawls along the ground, in intimate contact with each particular, but unable to unite them all into a totality. This is the ontological analogue of Caso's famous moral formula of *alas y plomo* (wings and lead), which signified that the virtuous individual should combine the wings of idealism with the lead of prudent realism. With regard to ontology, the complete thinker must intuit both universality and particularity through diverse acts of spirit, and have the equanimity of mind neither to reduce one to the other, nor to reduce either to scientific or logical concepts. Integral thought is not won by dialectical ingenuity but by remaining in constant contact with all of the limits

of life while holding fast to life's immediate integrity, or as Caso puts it, "unicity."

Caso's insistence on the concreteness, uniqueness, and inexhaustibility of the individual being informs later Mexican philosophy, particularly that of Leopoldo Zea and Emilio Uranga, both of whom associate the revolt against cultural imperialism with the defense of individuality. Unfortunately the extent of Caso's contribution is not often acknowledged, perhaps because in his youth he did not break completely with Porfirian politics and in his later years he turned towards a Kierkegaardian defense of faith. In *The Concept of Universal History* we find him at the height of his powers, teacher and philosopher in one, expositor and originator simultaneously — and most of all a capacious mind and a generous spirit.

Michael A. Weinstein

Notes

1. Eduardo Garcia Maynez, "Prologo," in García Máynez (ed.), *Antonio Caso: Breve Antología* México: Secretaria de Educación Pública, 1945, vi.

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THE CONCEPT OF UNIVERSAL HISTORY*

Antonio Caso

History as Science

Is history a science? — Thinkers (philosophers, historians, sociologists)," according to Altimira, "can be ranged into three groups with regard to this problem. Some deny altogether any scientific character to history, others acknowledge that history, in part, has such a character, and others, finally, affirm such a character and even attempt to constitute with it a new species of inquiry."[1]

No error can be committed — at least it would be inexplicable that it was committed — if that error was not based in some way on real data which were susceptible of being interpreted as they were by those who made the erroneous judgment. Spencer said — and his expression has met with good fortune since — *that there is a fund of truth in false things.* If, with respect to the nature of history and to its scientific or artistic character, there exist grave differences of opinion, this condition will probably be grounded in the fact that the very characters of history are susceptible of diverse interpretations, because, perhaps, the thing that we wish to define is incoherent in itself and, as John Stuart Mill teaches, "there is no agreement on the point of the definition of a thing except when there is agreement about the object of the definition." But it may also be the case that though history is coherent in itself it is so complex that in one of its aspects it appears as science and in another as art, or as art and science simultaneously, or as science and art *sui generis.* It could, finally, be the case that though not coherent on the whole in itself history adds to its at least relative incongruence a heterogeneity: Then the difficulty of defining it would explain the discrepancy of opinions to which Altimira refers.

There are great and well-known differences between a work of history such as that of Herodotus and one such as that of Polybius. Between history as St. Augustine conceives it and as Fustel de Coulanges understands it the differences are also obvious. But the differences are not so profound and decisive that we must consider the poetic works of Herodotus and St. Augustine's theological works as diverse in their essence from the works of Polybius and Fustel de Coulanges. Philosophical history is, fundamentally, a single knowledge. Similarly, the science of Albertus Magnus and Roger Bacon, and that of Descartes and Galileo, are aspects of the same science, so long as we make reference always to the entire complex of ideas of the century

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*From Eduardo García Máynez, *Antonio Caso: Breve Antologia,* Mexico: Secretaria de Educacion Publica, 1945, pp. 55-81. Translated for the *C.J.P.S.T.* by Michael Weinstein.

which engendered the particular scientific work and tinge it with the spirit of the eras which followed and made rectifications.

Consider, then, not the complete content of historical works, but what of the historic exists in them. Eliminate whatever is conventionally the auxiliary, contingent, and extrinsic — political and moral speculations, philosophical and religious reflections, mystical or pedagogical tendencies, etc. — and there will always remain a *sui generis* ground which will be, precisely, the object of the definition of history, whether it be considered as art or science, or as art and science simultaneously, or as art or science *sui generis*.

History, at first view, does not reproduce the general type of the sciences. This is, probably, the opinion of the impartial reader. While physics, chemistry, biology and sociology reproduce the physiognomic characteristics of a single ideational family, history separates itself from the common type. But we submit that this is a superficial opinion. Nevertheless, some deep cause must sustain it since it is so commonly held.

History, essentially, proceeds *ad narrandum*, reconstructing and reliving the past. The sciences, instead of turning their gaze to the past, fix it towards the future. History sets itself to investigate in the perennial development of life the life that was, the world that perished, the societies, traditions and customs that have disappeared. Its object of knowledge does not exist in the present; time incorporated that object in its passage and converted it into the present moment, or unmade that object forever.

What kind of science is this, so different from the others, which does not know in order to predict but in order to relive? How will history be able to maintain its scientific character when it refers to the past instead of dedicating itself to the future? What general facts will it discover? What natural symmetries and oppositions will it make precise, which are valid only for the past and are limited, in consequence, in universality and are contingent in relation to the future?

History and the Sciences. — The logical procedure of the sciences is deductive or inductive, but it always implies a general element towards which it is directed or from which it departs in order to effectuate reasoning. Through induction the scientific investigator derives from the study of certain facts a general result that does not admit of restrictions of time or space different from those of its terms — and if it admits of such restrictions we do not treat of a true induction but of an apparent induction. We refer, then, to the synthetic expression of what has been discovered previously, but without any passage from something known to something unknown and without augmentation of scientific knowledge. An astronomical, physical, or biological law covers an *indefinite* multiplicity of possible cases which will have to confirm that law uniformly insofar as they are produced. In contrast, what has been called

historical generalization is merely the synthetic expression of a certain people's, individual's, or civilization's previously defined attributes, which are, in sum, things that will not vary in the course of time. The possibility of variation is exhausted by the very essence of the historical fact, which is always referred to the past.

Deduction, equally, in deriving from a general proposition conclusions which are less general or particular, does so with a character of uniformity not only for the real, but for the possible, and without restrictions of place or time. In contrast, if the historian generalizes deductively or inductively he will do it always within the restrictions of the definition of his study. He will always refer to what has been at a certain time and will never again return in an identical form. The historian will define *ad libitum* the importance of the object of his knowledge: he can propose the history of a special individual (the biography of Cromwell or of Frederick the Great), the history of a city such as Florence or Paris, or the history of the civilization of Renaissance Italy, but Cromwell, Frederick the Great, Florence, Paris and Italian Renaissance civilization are equally individuals, equally unique in space and time. The role of inductive generalization or of reflections obtained by deduction from some historical generalization will never be the same as the function of the same logical procedures in the sciences. History contains rational elements resulting from a final constructive elaboration. The sciences, as we have said, contain results which are much less contingent; not simple generalizations, but laws; not summaries of observations, but uniformities of relations without any limitations of time and space but those inherent in their formulation; no aid from final intuitions, but efforts which fulfill their end by their formulation, which carry their object in themselves.

Historians of particular events. — All historians treat of particular events. An historian of genius, such as Thucydides, will describe the Peloponnesian War, revealing the essential and deep rivalry between Athens and Sparta, evoking the terrible and admirable period, saving from forgetfullness the specific attributes of men and things contemporary to him (the present always forms part of the past for the consciousness that perceives it). It is true that this philosophical spirit will tinge the work with perspicacious moral reflections and grave political considerations. It is true that he will put magnificent speeches in the mouths of heroes such as Pericles, but these disquisitions will not form the ultimate end of his work, although they may abound in it. What will make of his works always books of history and not treatises of moral philosophy will be the ultimate synthetic vision, the reconstructive intuition, the achieved aim of animating situations which are singular in time and space with data first refined by reason and then organized by the creative imagination.

The innumerable mythological, theological, historical and metaphysical

allusions that fill *The Divine Comedy* do not detract from its incomparable poetic stamp, nor do the noble aesthetic qualities of his style and the magic of his expression that would appear, at first blush, to be ineffable diminish the final meaning of Bergson's *Creative Evolution*. The ultimate aim, which in the great poet is the freest creation and in the French philosopher is universal intuition of the *élan vital* of existence, is, in the Greek historian, ideal resurrection of heroes and personalities who in reality lived and worked, engendering an historic epoch which is memorable for humanity. If the historian, as does Thucydides, succeeds in offering us the illusion of making those revived Hellenic nations move and develop before our eyes; if their action is revealed to our consciousness as is that of our contemporaries, he will have realized his design. The revelation of the *uniqueness* and singularity of the past is the ambition of history.

Synthesis. — In summary, while the sciences refer to genera, uniformities and laws, history, even when it uses rational procedures, does not formulate laws when it generalizes but simply generalizes as a means to its ultimate end which is the intuition of the individual.

While the sciences study what repeats itself universally, what occurs one time and several times and always, history refers to the unique, to what never comes back again to be what it was.

While the sciences are masters of time and are developed in order to predict the future, history sets its gaze towards the past, is confined to it, and investigates it only.

The concept of science and history. — Various thinkers have preferred to modify the concept of science in order to make the concept of history fit within it. Others, in contrast, who were more respectful of the truth and, in consequence, are less numerous, have preferred to declare that History is not a science.[2]

In speaking of Hegel Sir Alex Grant said that to take philosophy from Hegel's *Philosophy of History* is the same as to take poetry from Shakespeare — the debt is nearly universal. With even better reason we could affirm, suppressing all limitation, that it is a universal debt to take philosophy from Aristotle. We recur for the discussion of our theme to the Stagirite and interrogate his concept of *science* first and then his concept of history.

Aristotle was the direct opposite of a recalcitrant Cartesian, a sworn enemy of erudition and philology. We do not recur, then, to a violent and *a prioristic* philosopher, to whom the tradition has little importance, but to the one among all the Greeks who was the first historian of philosophy. That is to say, we recur to a great philosopher who was also an illustrious historian. "Aristotle," says Boutroux, "dedicated himself to profound historical studies in all the domains of science."[3]

Philosophy is, for Aristotle, *knowledge of the universal* and each science is a *partial* philosophy which is restricted to a certain object of knowledge. But without an element of generality there is no science. Aristotle declares, essentially, that there is no science of the particular as particular.[4]

With respect to history the Stagirite teaches: "The true difference (between the historian and the poet) resides in the fact that one refers to what has been and the other to what would have been able to be. This is what makes poetry something more philosophical and serious than history, since *poetry is occupied more with the universal and history more with the particular.* The universal, in general, is the whole of words or of deeds which probably or necessarily concern a given character, and the aim of poetry is to fit appropriate names to the generalities. The particular is, for example, what Alcibiades has done or what he has suffered."[5]

Putting together in the form of a syllogism both ideas we will have as the major premise that there is no science of the particular, as the minor premise that history knows the particular, and as the conclusion that there is no science of history.

It is true, as Altamira wishes to say, that the notion of science which Aristotle had is not precisely the contemporary notion (the concept of science is one of the most disputed points in the philosophy of our time), but whether we consider that concept as it appears in Greek intellectualism, in Emile Boutroux' philosophy of contingency, or in the contemporary pragmatism of James and Le Roy (which affirms the contingency not of laws, but of the very scientific facts) it will always be true to say that without an element of generality there is no science. That is to say that history, if it was knowledge of the particular, would have no right to be counted among the group of the sciences as a species of the common gender.

Who will fail to admit that without *types, genera, formative ideas, uniformities,* or *values* science is impossible? Who will be able to speak of a science *of the particular* without perceiving immediately the contradiction in the expressed terms? Though the Spanish historian previously cited would desire it, the mere vicissitudes of the concept of science do not affect the general problem that Aristotle resolved so clearly and so philosophically: At any time and in whatever philosophical system one investigates or even chooses by chance, science is impossible without a *substratum* of universality (even when it is not *necessary* as Aristotle thought it to be). The antithesis is indisputable and profound, and the conclusion of the proposed syllogism is perfect: *history is not science.*

Of the four great forms of intellectual activity — philosophy, science, art, and history — philosophy and science always refer to things that are not individual, universal, or general; art refers to absolute and possible individuality; and history refers to the particular and real, never to abstraction or generality.

The greatest of the philosophers also teaches, in the paragraph cited, his preference for poetry over history, because *"poetry is occupied more with the universal and history more with the particular."* On this point the genius of the Stagirite is not contradicted. The philosopher is one who knows how to find in the universal the explanation of the individual and in the necessity that he intuits the contingency that is given to him in experience. The poetry of a Shakespeare, by creating eternal types of human passion, such as Hamlet, Othello, and Lear, comes closer to philosophical intuition of the universal than the supreme historian such as Tacitus who only succeeds, by referring to some notable living personality (Caligula, Nero, or Domitian), in underscoring contingent and *historical* evil, which is less real and less perverse, within its essential particularity, than the vividly real, which is intuited aesthetically through innumerable experiences by the creative genius of the artist.

The thought of Schopenhauer on history as science. — Other great thinkers have followed Aristotle's example and have denied to history the character of science. Schopenhauer, as we are going to see immediately, shares Aristotle's judgment, and we should point out in passing that the German philosopher, as well as his Greek counterpart, were men who were amply gifted with the *form of universal sympathy* which, according to Hoffding, is the historical sense. The philosophical system of Schopenhauer has greater psychological than logical unity.

Poetry contributes more than history, according to Schopenhauer, to knowledge of human nature: "In this sense, we have to expect from the first more true lessons than from the second. Aristotle recognized this when he said: *Etres magis philosophica et meliore poesis est quam historia.*

"History cannot aspire to place itself in the same rank with the other sciences, since it cannot claim for itself the qualities that distinguish them. It lacks the fundamental character of all sciences, the subordination of known facts, in place of which it can only offer us their coordination. There is not, then, system in history as there is in any of the sciences. History is a type of learning, not a science, since in no manner does it know the particular through the general, but is obliged to take the individual fact directly and drag it, so to speak, along the ground of experience, while the sciences fly above because they have acquired vast general notions through which they dominate the particular and can, at least within certain limits, embrace in a glance the possibility of the things belonging to their domain so that they can contemplate with tranquility even the eventual and the future. The sciences, since they are systems of general notions, treat only of genera; history always treats of individual things, which means that if it were conceded a scientific character it would be a science of individuals, which implies contradiction.

Also, one draws from the preceding that all the sciences without exception treat of what always exists, whereas history relates what has existed but one time and will never exist again."[6]

The concept implies, in truth, a certain indisputable inferiority for history, but also a constant superiority. The sciences *soar* over the ground of experience and history *drags along*. Let us accept the metaphor and continue the allegory. But by flying the sciences take for themselves no more than abstract aspects, that is to say, ideals, and, therefore, irreals. History, *dragging itself along*, encounters the real individual, describes it, and delivers it to us as concrete and unique intuition. To soar will imply advantages, but we must confess that dragging along also has them, if we treat of grading the importance of both forms of *knowledge*. In the world there are no *astronomical, physical,* or *biological facts*. There are beings, *natural systems* as Bergson would say, *historical facts* which, compared among themselves, show common attributes which are the object of scientific laws. History, by dragging itself along, pervades and receives reality itself, whereas the sciences do no more than soar and see above it. The eagle, on his summit, does not distinguish everything; the serpent, in contrast, by limiting his horizon feels the earth with the crawling body. Philosophy is the eagle and history is the serpent. Both are sacred beings.

In summary, in history there is serial coordination but no system and no formation of hierarchies of notions as there is in science and philosphy. *History is a learning, not a science.* It is, perhaps, a form of irreducible knowledge, even when it participates in the character of science and of art. *The characters of historical facts, according to Meyer and Andler.* But it is not sufficient to affirm the particularity or individuality, the singularity or *uniqueness* of the facts which constitute the object of history, or to affirm history's character of pastness. It is necessary to define these characters, complementing the philosophical teachings of Aristotle and Schopenhauer which negate the scientific value of historical knowledge with the contributions offered by contemporary professional historians.

"The essential affirmation of the study of descriptive history," says Andler (summing up the conclusions of the famed historian Edward Meyer), "is that the object of this science is formed by individual facts. This does not mean that one treats only of facts which occur in individual human beings. Groups, peoples, and civilizations are collective individuals which have their own particularity. There are not two centuries or two actions which are the same. History has for its object the tracing of existing differences between these particular structures of men or of human groups which it describes as they are, changing and active, but irreducible."[7]

Meyer deduces highly important consequences from this fundamental concept of the object of the historical disciplines:

I. — *In the first place, general causes are not the resource of historical*

investigation. Such causes exist, but they are not to be defined in historical inquiry. The action of general facts, whether psychological or economic, provides only limits and does not explain the particular phenomena studied by the historian. Such facts are not sufficient to achieve the prediction of particular events which develop in the closed domain limiting the general facts themselves.

II. — Besides, *"the states of permanent things* are not history. Nothing such as the existence of the Alps has predetermined the historical existence of the peoples of Central Europe: the histories of Switzerland, Italy, Germany, and France are not intelligible except in light of the existence of the Alps, but the existence of the Alps does not belong to history. Historical facts are those which change and work through their change: peoples who are not civilized, whose social state does not change, are not historical peoples. They are as isolated and immobile blocks of granite around which the tide of peoples flows. Inorganic and uncivilized masses can throw themselves precipitously against evolved civilizations, as did the Huns and the Mongols who assailed Europe and who operated mechanically as projectiles."

III. — On the other hand, *collective facts are not historical facts.* The destiny of the multitudes cut loose in one of Caesar's battles has no importance. The strategic and tactical plan which gave victory is the fact which merits attention. *The masses are the substratum of* history, the material on which events are realized and institutions are carved. Material is not interesting except with regard to the form that it takes, and this form is an individual work.

IV. — As far as history is extended, it will never escape from the bounds of particular facts. Particular life is of a civilization such as that of the Western and Eastern peoples of the Ancient Era. *History is never a science of the general. Not only is it difficult to discover the laws of history; it is contradictory to search for them.*[8]

When history is conceived as description of the unique, irreducible, and past individual, whether one treats of men, peoples, civilizations, or races, one sees clearly in what manner its object is appropriately distinguished from that of the sciences. The sciences study universal recurrences, oppositions and adaptations which are reducible to generic uniformities; similarities, contrasts, and symmetries — all that falls under the dominion of the rational act, that is formulated in ideas or notions that generalize attributes, in judgments that compare ideas, in reasonings that compare judgments or that result from elementary reasonings. History, which utilizes abstract scientific notions that limit or circumscribe its own field, is *the learning which drags itself along* so that it can better touch its object. It is referred to what in logic are called the *lowest species*, that is to say, to real beings, to facts that are not selected by analysis, to entities that do not appear at the behest of theories, to what is not an object abstracted from life, but to the life itself from which all

objects have been abstracted, always individual, singular, irreducible, different.

The Concept of Universal History

History and poetic creation. — In order to study the nature of history it is necessary to recur, rather than to the disquisitions of philosophers, to the works of the historians themselves. They are the ones who best can indicate to us the essence of the activity that they practice.

We will recur to the masters of the historical genre and we will see how their labor is not only an effort of criticism and documentation, but is even more a poetic creation or at least has much of the artistic in it.

It is true that today history is not written with the end of moralizing or delighting, even when it is true, on the other hand, that no one was ever moralized by history and that, written by Xenophon and Plutarch, it delighted all men. It is true, also, that history has been strengthened through the centuries with the riches of a more detailed erudition. Otfried Muller has been able to call philology the *"integral and full perception of ancient intellectual life,"* and his definition is worthy of his heroic life consecrated to the perfection of historical knowledge. Nevertheless, far from being capable of reduction to mere erudition, respected for its completeness, history is an organic and aesthetic attempt at reconstruction of the past. Only the one who reconstructs the life that was the world that was once made and later dispersed in the sempiternal evolution of things merits the name of historian. The object of history is what happened once in time and space and will never return as it was, whether one treats of humanity, of animal or vegetable species, or, finally, of the planet itself, a great historical being which made all history possible. History's objects are unique beings among their kind, unique among men, peoples, races, and civilizations, always personal and individual, always different.

Biography and history. — The word biography has been reserved for the history of a human person. Biography is always history. That is to say, it is a faithful portrait of a unity, whether one treats of a being or of a nation. The great historians are those who, besides possessing the unavoidable accomplishments of erudition and criticism, know how to restore and revive the matter of their investigations.

The historical work begins with a critical and scientific preface. Sources are discussed, documents are assayed, and witnesses are tested before the tribunal of "pure reason." But this effort is not sufficient. It is necessary to follow the historical work further until it achieves its ultimate end.

When the facts have been tested scrupulously and the documents speak with

clarity the most admirable work has not yet begun. It is necessary to complete the investigation with an intuition of the whole.

Suppose, in order to use a metaphor which perhaps illuminates the doctrine, that the historian is as one who had to construct a solid body with data which, diminished and dispersed, lay in museums and ruins, in libraries and archives. Suppose that the solid which had to be constructed was a pyramid. But now imagine that despite having calculated and designed the geometrical construction one had not yet had the immediate and luminous intuition of the total pyramid, that one had not seen in the mind the conjunction of the sides of the pyramid in a single point. Despite all the effort of criticism, the geometrical solid could not be constructed.

The historian and the geometer. — As it goes with the geometer, so it goes with the historian. It is necessary *to intuit, to project* consciousness towards an ideal point on which the whole converges as do the sides of the pyramid in the illustrative metaphor. If one divines the point of convergence, if one has the artistic genius necessary to sympathize mysteriously with the character of a people or of a man of genius, one achieves *ipso facto* historical creation. If one remains indefinitely in an attitude of bare and incomplete criticism one is not an historian.

Now, this final effort is essentially artistic. It is achieved only through intuition. It is fulfilled only through poetic genius.

Why does the story of Joan of Arc told by Michelet or the biography of Frederick the Great written by Carlyle captivate us? Why do we always prefer a few pages from Titus Livius to a repertory of facts about the Roman Republic, or the severe and elegant style of Tacitus to all the information about the crimes of the Caesars? Because criticism is not intuition and voluminous chronicles do not revive the past. Because history is always art, the profound art of evoking over the dust of the centuries the soul of the centuries.

Common wisdom says that history repeats itself. This is not true. History never repeats itself. Neither the genius of Greece nor the majesty of Rome will ever be reborn from their venerable ruins. Themistocles will never return to lead his generous and triumphant hosts. The heroes who once lived will never return again. There is a fund of eternal renewal in the universe. Jesus expressed the mystery of the perennial youth of creation: "My father still works."

Bacon's conception. — It is difficult to characterize better than Bacon did the appropriate rank and universal extent of history: "The most exact classification that can be made of the human sciences is drawn from consideration of the three faculties of the soul which are the sites of science.

History refers to memory, poetry to imagination, and philosophy to reason."

"The proper object of history is constituted by individuals, inasmuch as they are found circumscribed in time and space, because though natural history seems to be occupied with species, nevertheless, if it treats of species it is only because of the similarities that natural things show when they are comprehended in this way. Such similarity leads to the belief that he who knows one individual knows them all, a belief which induces to confusion. If one sometimes encounters unique individuals within their species, such as the sun and the moon, or finds certain aspects that separate individuals from their species, one still does not have the least ground for excluding them from a natural history. There is no more ground for excluding individuals from a civil history. Now, all these concerns have to do with memory."

"History is natural or civil. The divisions of natural history are drawn from the state and condition of nature which can be found in three different states and under three types of regimes."

"Either nature is free and develops in its ordinary course, as in the heavens, the animals, the plants, and all that is presented to our view; or nature by virtue of the evil disposition and resistance of rebellious matter, is thrown outside of its bounds, as in the case of monsters; or, finally, it is, through human art and industry, constrained, modeled, and in certain mode rejuvenated, as in the case of artificial works."

"The deeds of man are related in civil history. Without doubt, divine things do not shine in natural or civil history, so these things also constitute a species of history which is commonly called sacred or ecclesiastical history. In our opinion the importance of the arts and letters is great enough to warrant a special history for them, which in our plan is comprehended together with civil and ecclesiastical history."

By considering the precise and prophetic concepts just drawn from *De Dignitatis et Augmentis Scientiarum* one will see how Bacon achieved the formulation of a complete concept of universal history, in the sense that his knowledge cannot be confined within the domain of the human but has to include the study of the entire universe, as much in its typical forms as in its exceptional aspects (the history of monsters). That is to say, for the great philosopher history refers to the totality of existence, as do the sciences and philosophy, only its viewpoint is the consideration of the individual and not of the generic and common.

Generally, when we think of something historical we reflect on human history and especially on political history. Nevertheless, neither is all history political nor is it even simply human. The stars have their history as do the animal and vegetable species. The concept of universal history must include human and nonhuman history; that is to say, it must be the total history of the universe.

"All energy tends to be degraded into heat and heat to be spread uniformly

among bodies." This great cosmological law is the foundation of history. If physical laws were reversible as are pure mechanical laws, the principle of eternal recurrence or orbital return, which the Stoics conceived and which Nietzsche formulated in his *Zarathustra*, would express the transformations of the universe, because time is infinite and within its infinity the possible transformations of matter and force would be exhausted without fail. By reproducing *one* of the combinations of events *all of the others* would follow identically in their rigorous order by virtue of the law of causation. As Marcus Aurelius said: "The things of the world are always the same in their orbital revolutions, from above to below, from century to century."[9]

The principle of Carnot and Clausius. — The great law of Carnot and Clausius, the principle of the degradation of energy, introduces *historicity* into existence and nourishes and sustains it constantly. If only the first law of energy, the principle of conservation, operated, history would not exist, and purely mechanical and essential *reversibility* would make of cosmic facts phenomena without history, pure mechanical or geometrical relations. But Carnot's law makes time a real factor, an active dimension of universal existence.

"A pendulum which moves in the atmosphere from A to B," says Boutroux, "must overcome a resistance, but in order to overcome it will produce an amount of work and by working will lose part of its energy. If, then, the direction of movement is changed the pendulum will not return to its original point because it will have lost energy both in its initial and in its reverse motion. It can be established as a universal rule that whenever there is work the original quantity of energy is irreparably diminished with the production of heat."[10]

That is to say, physics, with regard to mechanics and pure geometry, is a new science which takes into account and considers in its study not only the quantity but also the quality of forces. Heat is of an inferior quality to work. Boutroux adds: "Physical laws cannot be reduced to those of mechanics."

Existence has probably been developing through a constant change in potential, which implies a constant qualitative transformation. The quantity of energy has remained the same, but its quality has been degraded. Without a fall in cosmic potential work would be impossible. Hence, the degradation of energy means an irreversible and real succession of phenomena or, in other words, an historical order. To summarize: *Nothing is lost and all is transformed through the irrevocable order which is history.*

Astronomical history. — The solar system bears witness to the enormous drama which drew the sun and the planets from the primitive nebula, casting them into their trajectories through space. The ring of Saturn, the moons of

Jupiter, the melancholic little world that lights up the nights of our globe are remains, testaments of a history that they reveal in their sempiternal revolutions.

At the beginning everything was submerged in a primitive and incoherent homogeneity. The acts of the cosmic drama are patiently deciphered by the astronomers and reveal to us the various dynamic moments of the Creation. There was a planet, between Jupiter and Mars, which broke, perhaps, into a thousand irregular fragments, forming asteroids which are as obedient as the stars themselves to universal gravitation.

Chemical and geological history. — The different chemical elements are probably also data for a *chemical history*. The new scientific spirit seems to fulfill the fantasy of the old alchemists. By submitting some chemical compounds to radiation from the marvellous *simple body*, Sir William Ramsay finds evidence that guarantees the possibility of some elements being transmuted into others. Ozone, which is merely non-electrified or allotropic oxygen, evinces different properties from those of the famous element discovered by Lavoisier.

Geologists show the dramatic shifts in the earth's history through the superposition of its strata. Flora and fauna which are specific to each layer are analyzed by paleontologists and naturalists. Just as an historian knows how to reconstruct a civilization from excavations in the venerable Hellenic or Latin soil that yield only a few remains of its immortal monuments, so Cuvier could reconstruct, with a bone or a vertebra, the complete skeletal form of the great antediluvian animals.

Natural history. — The exemplary works of Lamarck and Darwin opened up magnificent historical perspectives to science. One could then conceive that the most distinct and diverse species could grow one out of the other. Man himself, once isolated as an Olympian from his brothers, began to acknowledge the immense accumulation of qualities and attributes that link his existence to universal life. Just as is the case with the simple bodies of chemistry, the organic species are unstable and historical. At one time there were neither chemical nor biological laws. Only at a certain historical moment does the magnificent complexity of attributes which are analyzed today by chemists, naturalists, physicists, and biologists begin to develop.

Evolution is universal and not only human. Time has worked on all things and has exerted its action on them. History is not peculiar or exclusive to men and human societies. Insofar as anything is within time, far from remaining unalterable it is linked with other things in an incessant transformation. The very orbits of the planets are not identical over successive revolutions. An eternal register is open on life and the world and in it are inscribed all of the events, whether mournful or fruitful, human or nonhuman. The only thing

that never changes is the law of eternal change. To exist is to be transformed or, in other words, to have a history.

Science, History, Art and Philosophy. — In light of the preceding discussion it appears that the appropriate field for the historian is as vast as that of the learned man or of the philosopher. Science is prediction, generalization towards the future, "anticipation of experience." Its sphere is the future as intimately linked through the present with the more remote past. Philosophy investigates the intimate nature of things, final and ontological causes, the being which is hidden in everlasting change, the essence which is veiled through interminable evolutions. History turns its view to the past. It leaves to metaphysics the eternal present and to science the constant future, and applies itself to examining the register of time for the world that was made and the reality that was actualized. The historian is an incorregible romantic. He applies himself humbly to learning how life unfolded on earth, how the globe became separated from its origin, how each concrete being came forth from the imperceptible in the course of time.

The scientist is the heroic one, the philosopher the holy one, and the historian the poet. The first symbolizes the ambition which anticipates reality, the second the mystical peace in changeless being. The historian gathers with his pious hands the works of the centuries and with the dust of the ages reconstructs extinct civilizations, species and celestial bodies. Time, invincible and indifferent, gives to everything its reason and takes from everything its illusions.

History as an Irreducible Form of Knowledge

Philosophy and its object. — Unlike the sciences which investigate *laws,* philosophy investigates *principles,* that is, synthetic intuitions of the world. To order *first principles,* as Spencer said, is to philosophize. We see clearly, then, the end of metaphysics. The sciences offer abstract analyses of being, but existence is concrete. If we had to content ourselves with the collections of efficacious and coordinated abstractions that are called geometry, algebra, astronomy, chemistry, etc., our knowledge would remain permanently truncated; it would be knowledge for action, not for knowledge itself. Scientific formulae are the ideal and practical designs of life, not life itself.

Philosophy is initiated with a primary intuition — Plato's idea, Aristotle's potency and act, atoms, monads, Schopenhauer's will, Bergson's *élan vital* — and with data elaborated by science, historical descriptions, and artistic creations. It then develops its synthesis and delivers to consciousness the various supreme approximations of the spirit to reality: Platonism,

Aristotelianism, monadology, idealism yesterday and pragmatism or transcendental phenomenology today.

History, like philosophy, has a universal scope. While things *are being* they do not concern history. As soon as they no longer are they will belong to it. History does not have to demonstrate any principle. Like Newton *it does not make hypotheses.* It does not know whether or not the world exists as a totality. That might be a plausible theory, but in the end it is only a theory. God and the soul are treated by history as they were by Kant as ideas of pure reason. In contrast, plurality is its object and difference its preoccupation. Philosophy argues that existence is creation and evolution. History knows about concrete creations and realized changes. Philosophy says: "All is imagination or memory, inheritance or abrupt variation, repetition or originality." History only perceives unities which are never repeated, even when they always tend to repeat themselves.

The mission of history. — "The living organism is a thing which lasts. Its past is totally prolonged into its present and remains actual and active there. If this were not so could we understand that the organism passes through definite phases and changes in age, that it has, in sum, a history? Wherever something lives there is a register open in which time is inscribed."[11]

The mission of history is to read the register of which Bergson speaks, but it is not easy to decipher the sometimes enigmatic characters of the living text. One must reconstruct the past, severing it from the present, without ever abstracting in order to generalize. One must make an approximation to each singular life with that form of spiritual approximation which is so different from pure reason: the intuition of the concrete individual.

The difference between Philosophy and History. — We do not identify, then, as Croce does, history and philosophy.[12] They both have in common the investigation of concrete entities — metaphysical principles or singular things. They are also in agreement in considering time as real duration, not as a vacant model of existence. But in other respects history and philosophy differ. To philosophize is to strain towards universal explanation, whereas to do history is to describe indefinable unities. The difference is obvious and unvarying.

To define an object of knowledge is to reduce it to genera, to think of it in relation to a gender, as a species or gender included within a wider one (*dictum de omnite et nullo*). Now, the indefinable is the historical. Thus, as Croce himself says, the thesis of descriptive history, of *historiography,* is true. Description is an intellectual operation which, grounded in the intuition of the individual, serves as a complement to generalizing and defining intelligence.

Scientific analysis reduces each real being to groups of general formulae which define attributes, but a being is not a group of attributes; it is an individuality (*singulare quid*) from which reason selects attributes, that is to say, common aspects which do not have history. Only *durable concretes* have history — a sun, a planet, an animal, a man, a people, or better put, the Sun; the Earth; Bucaephelus, Alexander's horse; Plato of Athens; Dante Alighieri; England; Holland; Roumania; New Spain; Medieval Civilization; the Indo-European Race: everything that will never be exhausted of attributes, despite the unremitting erosion of analysis, because it exists, really, within its own unicity.

Philosophy and history, both of which are intuitive, express what is undefined and indefinable by the sciences. Neither the *supreme genera* nor the *lowest species* of the logicians are susceptible of definition.

When it attains to ultimate notions reason confesses its essential limitation. It is powerless to explain these notions and yet it presupposes them as the principles of all explanation.

The same situation occurs when reason encounters the other limit of its sphere of action. Individuals and historical events, which would imply the conjunction of infinite genera, infinite laws, infinite uniformities and symmetries, are also indefinable by reason. Neither the simple nor the complex, neither the universal essence of things nor their incomparable individual character, neither universality nor individuality is the object of knowledge for pure reason, the tireless elaborator of generalizations and abstractions.

Such are the limits of pure rational knowledge: philosophy, which is intuition of the universal, and history, which is reconstruction of the individual, of the unique, of the incomparable realities which existence deposited in its continuous overflowing. Between these two disciplines fit all of the sciences and all of the endeavors. The genius of Plato and of Thucydides define the eternal summits of intelligence from which one discerns from a distance the hidden and ineffable infinite which religions sometimes evoke or humanize with the splendor of their myths and their pious and comfortless impotence.

The difference between History and Art. — History and art, which are grounded in essentially identical intuitions, differ from one another from various viewpoints. History is intuition of the *individual-concrete-real*; it studies what has been but once in time and space. Art treats of the *individual-concrete-possible.* It does not matter to the artist whether or not a given fact has occurred, whether the complex of circumstances has worked in this way or another. So long as the fact was possible within the conditions determined by the artist himself he will be able to create beautiful works by giving us his

intuition of reality. *Reason and its determinations are for the artist but a limit to his action. For the historian they are a constant element in his endeavor, an integral function of his activity.* Thus, Croce has referred correctly to the logical elements of historical judgment. The historian *a fortiori* is confined to narration of the event. He lets us know his particular intuition of something that was for one time and will never again be present under the same conditions and with the same aspects.

But, knowledge of the individual which has been real also falls within knowledge of the possible individual; at least reason conceives of the first intuition as a species of the second. Thus, the artist can treat of what has been and of what would have been able to be in the same work of art; that is to say, he can mix historical and artistic intuitions in the same representation of reality. This hybrid genre, formed jointly by history and art, includes the epic, the ballad, the novel, and the historical drama. However, what there is of historical reconstruction in the work of art, even when it is better and more exact than what can be found in some genuinely historical works, is subordinated to the *final end* of the work, which is aesthetic and not historical.

The opinion of Aristotle and Schopenhauer, who see something more profound in art than in history, seems to be unquestionable. But this does not mean that we should deny to historical knowledge its indisputable necessity. But whereas the historian does not offer us more than an aspect of reality (the aspect that reality effectively had in a determinate space and time), the artist shows us the greater number of individual aspects, condensed in a psychological moment; that is to say, he gives us the fundamental characteristic of reality. His mission is to destroy those generalities of the common life and of the social milieu in which the historical occurs in order to extract in all of its transparent purity and virgin meaning the necessary symbol, the absolute expression of the real and contingent individualities of history.

The activity of the artist differs, then, in two essential respects from the task of the historian. The end of history is not the same as the end of art, and if both are disinterested activities of the spirit, this similarity should not lead to their confusion: History presents distinctive and different characteristics from those of art and, thus, is able to demand its autonomy as an irreducible form of knowledge.

The historical sense. — The historical sense, according to Hoffding, is a form of *universal sympathy.* Perhaps it is the supreme form of human sympathy. To know how to interpret in luminous syntheses the successive crises in the life of the species is not merely to understand but to love; to love intellectually as Spinoza and Socrates loved, and as those have loved who in the limitless development of thought have succeeded in unifying in a single act of

consciousness knowledge and emotion, representation and will, the precise, geometrical logic of pure reason, and the vital logic of instinct and sentiment. Historical truth, which like metaphysics is quintessentially human, is engendered only within the harmony of ideas and intuition, within the intimate coherence of spirit.

History has to be written Platonically, by philosophizing with the total spirit. Only so is new life infused into the inert, do extinct institutions and beliefs rise up again, does the motley mass of men and things evoked over the ruins consecrated by the veneration of peoples recover vivacity. Only so does the vast treasure chest of relics which humanity has deposited on the planet in fulfilling its constant destiny — its perpetual death and its perpetual resurrection — become dynamic again.

History is a *creative imitation,* not an invention as art is, or an abstract synthesis as are the sciences, or a philosophical intuition of universal principles.

Notes

1. *Modern Questions of History,* p. 106.
2. "The human spirit," says Bacon, "once it has been seduced by certain ideas, whether by virtue of their enchantment or through the empire of tradition and faith, is obliged to give way and to put itself in accord with them. Though the proofs that refute such ideas be very numerous and conclusive, the spirit forgets them, depreciates them, or through some subtle distinction sets them aside and rejects them, not without grave damage to itself. But the spirit finds it necessary to safeguard the authority of its beloved sophisms." *Novum Organum,* Aphorism 46.
3. *Great Encyclopedia,* Article on "Aristotle."
4. *Metaphysics* II, II. *Nicomachian Ethics, VI,* II.
5. The reader will find in a later chapter a discussion of the hypothesis of Windelband and Rickert, who have found in values the universal element of history. (This discussion is not reproduced here, *Trans.*)
6. *The World as Will and as Representation,* Chapter XXXVIII.
7. *German Philosophy in the Nineteenth Century.*
8. *Op. cit.,* p. 216.
9. *Soliloquies of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius,* p. 188 of the Spanish version of don Fausto Díaz de Miranda: Biblioteca clásica, Book CXVII.
10. *The Idea of Natural Law,* p. 109 of the Spanish version of A. Caso.
11. Bergson, *Creative Evolution,* p. 16.
12. *Logic,* Part II, Chapter IV and relevant note.

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THE ETHICS OF CHARITY: ANTONIO CASO'S DEFENSE OF CIVILIZATION

Michael Weinstein and Deena Weinstein

The myth of the philosopher as permanent resident of the ivory tower serves a dual purpose in society. It preserves the philosopher's autonomy of inquiry from the powers that be and it allows the powers that be to exercise their control unencumbered by philosophy. That the tower is a myth seems clear from various perspectives. Outside the tower, in the social world, is both the source of the philosopher's problematics and the philosopher's *raison d'être* (or *raison d'écrire*). The independence of the ivory tower is also questionable when one notes the profusion and profundity of philosophical analyses at times of rapid and unsettling societal and civilizational changes, such as those in fifth century Athens or in Mexico at the turn of the present century.

At no time as much as in the twentieth century have the barriers between the ivory tower and the other social institutions been so permeable. The problem of the relationship between philosophy and a deep concern for the future of civilization engendered a corpus of work which may be termed crisis philosophy and is exemplified in such writings as Karl Jaspers' *Man in the Modern Age,* Gabriel Marcel's *Man Against Mass Society,* and Georg Simmel's *The Conflict in Modern Culture,* among many others.[1] Crisis philosophy, emerging throughout the world in the first two decades of this century, appeared in Mexico as the criticism against the positivistic ideology which was sustaining the waning Porfirian dictatorship. Mexican positivism was based on the principle that both political and ideological diversity could be eliminated by scientific methods, by technocratic administration and an educational system founded on Comte's positive philosophy.[2] The attempt to dispense with both politics and metaphysics (questions of what is of value and what is real) began to be attacked by the very children of those who had instituted the system. A group of the more brilliant sudents educated in the positivistic mode decided to enrich what they judged to be their deficient education with independent study of the philosophical classics, which they undertook by forming their own school, the Ateneo de Juventud. Among these students were José Vasconcelos and Antonio Caso, who were to become the founders of contemporary Mexican philosophy. Neither Vasconcelos nor Caso ever severed the bond between philosophy and politics which was at the root of their original criticism. The formation of the Ateneo was a self-consciously political, as well as an intellectual, enterprise, although it was not explicitly a challenge to the regime's right to rule. The positivists had already

breached the walls of the ivory tower by their program of scientific education for scientific administration. The young Mexican critics did not attempt to rebuild the walls but rather brought speculative thought to bear on the public situation.

The criticism forged by the Ateneo was rooted in the philosophy that was becoming dominant in the Western world — vitalism. Vitalist thought was a part of the *fin du siècle* reaction against the restrictive systems of idealism and naturalism, both of which had tried to demonstrate that historical development is rational. Vitalism questioned the principle of a rational basis of society, or, indeed, of life itself, and, thus, undermined traditional justifications for civilization and created, at least, an intellectual crisis. The critics of the regime, by embracing vitalism, were confronted not only with the problem of replacing positivistic rationalism with some other principle, but of building a public philosophy without a rational principle at all. The history of contemporary Mexican philosophy can be understood as the attempt to grapple with this problem and to resolve it.

Antonio Caso, the most influential Mexican philosopher during the first half of the twentieth century, was conscious of the crisis caused by vitalism. In his published work, which spans the period from the years immediately preceding the Revolution of 1910 through World War II, he attempted to determine some basis beyond life itself to ground and explain life, and to provide principles for the conduct of social relations. The following discussion will examine Caso's response to vitalism, his effort to defend a nonrational ground for civilization and social relations, and, particularly, his attempt to create an ethics based on charity. We will argue that his project never succeeds in overcoming its vitalist roots, that his ethic disguises the quest for an ontology, and that his denigration of reason destroys the possibility for a public philosophy.

Vitalism and the Anti-Vital

Caso's greatest work, *Existence as Economy, as Disinterest, and as Charity (La Existencia como Economía, como Destinterés y como Caridad)*, exemplifies the mood or mentality of crisis that has characterized so much of contemporary Western philosophy. Caso initiates his inquiry into the fundamental attitudes of human beings towards their existence with an observation of the character of the present era, arguing that the "systematic exaltation" of life above charity, which is a hallmark of the moral consciousness of our time, is really a glorification of "force, unscrupulous domination, and Life without law."[3] Hence, he asserts that "our time is one of the most bitter in the history of the world." Caso's life project as a philosopher can be understood as a continuing attempt to determine a ground for our existence beyond life, to find a basis for overcoming force and domination, to

give Life a law transcendent over it, and, so, to dispel the bitterness of the time. He is, then, primarily a public philosopher, who intends to explore the inner dynamics of Western civilization, to diagnose its failure by exploring the full range of human possibility, and to move beyond the failure to a new and critically defensible ground for an ethical public situation. Although his thought is directed towards the inner world of the person, towards how human beings make themselves objects of their own existence and determine it, his thought is not enclosed in the ivory tower, but is given principle by the implicit understanding of the philosopher as the guardian of civilized life.

Caso's philosophy is determined by two general and unanalyzed terms, experience and existence, within which the possible attitudes of persons towards their own possibilities are articulated. He observes that "the philosophy of our time has to be based on experience, but on *all* experience: on that of the laboratory and on that of the pew."[4] And then he adds: "Philosophy is the explanation of existence."[5] Implicit in Caso's choice of categories is an understanding of philosophy which later in the twentieth century would be identified with the existentialists.[6] Human beings, for Caso, are existence, always active, always having to take up a stance or attitude (*actitud*) towards themselves and their deeds. The content upon which their determinations are made is experience in its totality, all of that which appears regardless of whether it is conventionally distinguished as external or internal. Within the field of experience, which is given form by the active response of the person, philosophy is the special activity of defining the fundamental possibilities for existence, the categories of possible response. In its most general form, then, Caso's philosophy is what has been called "existential ontology," although Caso developed his system independently and at the same time as Jaspers articulated the first self-conscious European existentialism.

Existential ontology is generally structured by a distinction between orders of existence (what Caso calls *actitudes*) on the basis of their "authenticity" and "inauthenticity," or whether they actualize the human being's essence or falsify it. Such is the case for Caso's system, even though he does not use the terms authentic and inauthentic. The three basic attitudes towards existence defined by Caso, economy, disinterest, and charity, are contrasted according to how fully they actualize the true possibilities of the human being. The root problem of existential ontology is to ground the authentic possibilities in an interpretation of being and to demonstrate how the inauthentic possibilities arise and are related to them. Heidegger, for example, in *Being and Time,* defines Dasein's "ownmost possibility" as being-towards-death and attempts to derive all other "inauthentic possibilities" from Dasein's "flight" from its ownmost possibility into the "chatter" of the They-self, which is merely an alienated or deprived ("privative") mode of resolute choice in the face of Nothing. In contrast, Sartre defines the authentic *pour soi* as absolute self-

determining freedom and derives inauthenticity ("bad faith") from a flight from self-responsibility into the congealed and defined realm of the *en soi.* Characteristic of all existential ontologies is the separation of authentic existence from any rational principle and the identification of reason with inauthentic existence. This separation raises the question of how it is possible to know that a certain mode of existence is authentic and may account for why each existential ontology interprets the basic categories differently, making each existentialism appear, to an outsider, as merely the product of personal self-expression. Authentic existence is always defined in terms of a notion of freedom, but each existentialism has its own interpretation of freedom, which is radically opposed to the others.

Caso's existential ontology is distinguished from others by its strong dependence upon vitalistic metaphysics. The three attitudes towards existence, economy, disinterest, and charity, are distinguished from one another on the basis of whether they are immanent to or transcendent over life. Unlike most European existentialists, who were critics of idealism and, therefore, initiated their reflections with a critique of consciousness, Caso attacked vitalism and, thus, began by interpreting the category of life. In general, Caso's starting point bound him to a dualistic ontology, which would frustrate all of his efforts to ground civilization anew in a coherent idea of the person. The European existentialists were monists, for whom inauthenticity was, in essence, a "privative" mode of consciousness. For example, Heidegger interprets us as "falling" beings whose vocation is to lift ourselves up into the truth. For Caso, on the other hand, we are *fallen* beings, who are immersed in life and who must transcend our estate heroically rather than merely recover ourselves. Existential ontology, then, is a critical philosophy, which is affected in its results by its original object of criticism.

Just as Heidegger began *Being and Time* with an analysis of our "falling" existence, what he called "everydayness," Caso begins with a description of our fallen existence, existence as economy. According to Caso, life is ruled by the principle of economy: maximum advantage with minimum effort. Unlike many other vitalists, such as Simmel, Bergson, and Ortega, Caso defines life morally, claiming that "vital energy," which is an original and irreducible reality, is "conscious or unconscious egoism."[7] Life, for Caso, is discontinuous with any other order of existence, having its own "immanent finality" which is defined as the monopolization (*acaparamiento*) of all which is not itself. Within this concept of monopolization is summarized all of the various nineteenth century biological and utilitarian interpretations of existence, from the egoism of utilitarianism to the Darwinian struggle for survival. Biologists would not accept such a definition which intermixes the conscious and the unconscious. However, Caso does not claim that egoism is conscious life, but that unconscious life is unconscious egoism.[8] Even play is merely, for Caso, a preparation to do battles with future adversaries.[9]

ETHICS OF CHARITY

Caso's interpretation of life contains the problem of how he is able to know the principle of the unconscious.[10] Critiquing his inability to solve this problem, however, is not our major concern. Instead, our interest is focused on his interpretation of life, which is defined in such a way as to allow no exit from it, except by some movement or act of existence which discloses a mode of being antithetical to life. Life can only be transcended in a way entirely antithetical to itself. This means that Being has to contain at least two separate realities; that Being has to include life within itself rather than to be coextensive with it. Transcendence of life cannot be performed by any act of rational thinking because Caso identifies reason with science and science with economy. Therefore, in Caso's terms, reason is merely an extension of egoism and, thus, does not surpass existence as economy. The first attitude towards existence, then, is not voluntarily assumed, but is a stance which each individual must adopt by virtue of being alive and of being continuous with all forms of life.

The move beyond life must involve the rejection of either one or both of the components of the principle of economy: maximum advantage or minimum effort. Such a rejection could proceed in any of eight possible ways, depending upon the possibilities of modifying advantage and effort by maximum, minimum, or indifference, each combination yielding a uniquely determinable principle. Caso, however, does not discuss nine attitudes towards existence, but only three. An understanding of why he excludes the six other possible principles without even mentioning them will be explored later in our critique of his system. For the present it is merely necessary to describe how he proposes to transcend the vital economy, first by appealing to existence as disinterest and second to existence as charity.

Existence as disinterest is the realm of aesthetic experience and transcends vital egoism according to the principle of indifference to advantage and maximum effort. Caso asserts that "art is *innate disinterest* which life does not explain; it demands an enormous effort and its result is useless."[11] The world of art is not only anti-vital but anti-rational, because "to think is to relate, to utilize," while the contemplation of beauty is exhausted by an intuition in which "the subject *is* the object." Caso is primarily concerned with existence as disinterest in reference to its function as a mediation or intermediate sphere between "vital egoism" (economy) and "heroic altruism" (charity): "Good and evil, combat, triumph, and defeat; all of them can be viewed with disinterest by art."[12] The first step beyond life, then, is the ability to contemplate its dynamics with detachment and to find satisfaction in its expressions for themselves and not for any ulterior purpose. This step, however, is not spontaneous, but requires great effort.

The step to charity requires one further modification of disinterest, in which maximum effort is retained and indifference to advantage is replaced by minimum advantage. For Caso, existence as charity is the complete negation

and reversal of vital egoism, a movement of conversion in which goodness, love, and sacrifice are identical: "The equation of goodness is expressed by saying: Sacrifice = maximum effort with minimum advantage."[13] Existence as charity, or sacrificial love, is also the "ownmost" human possibility, the perfection of human existence, because the charitable act leaves "nothing *in potentia*," but expresses the completeness of personality actively. In opposition to Heidegger and Sartre, who define authenticity in terms of self-control, Caso defines it as fulfilled self-deliverance, not to an object outside of the self, but to the self's own act. In charity the division between subject and object is not overcome by the absorption of subject into object, as it is in disinterest, or by the absorption of the object into the subject, as it is in the vital economy, but by the absorption of subject and object in a self-giving act which cannot be reasoned, but can only be grasped intuitively in the process of its realization. Existence as charity, then, does not contain a rational ethic, the principle of which can be made a maxim to regulate conduct, but is, itself, the source and actualization of goodness.

Our brief sketch of Caso's attitudes towards existence is sufficient to define the structure of his ontology. The first great division in the ontology is between the vital economy and the two orders of the anti-vital, disinterest and charity. Both orders of the anti-vital are united by their reversal of the law of the conservation of energy; both substitute maximum for minimum effort and exclude the possibility for indifference towards effort expended. In essence, the law of conservation is the principle of instrumental reason, or efficiency, and, so, the anti-vital is primarily the anti-rational. Within the sphere of the anti-vital, disinterest and charity are differentiated by their negations of maximum advantage, aesthetic activity being indifferent to advantage and charity seeking its minimization. Interpreted dialectically, disinterest transcends the moment of vital egoism by surpassing evil through neutralizing the categories of good and evil in pure contemplation of an object, while charity reunites the purified existent with life in an act reversing life's dynamic. In this sense, Caso inverts the dialectic of idealism, which moves from intuition to self-conscious reason, by uniting reason with life on the level of the unconscious and identifying the transcendence of life with an intuition available only in the process of activity. For Caso, then, freedom is opposed to reason, while for the idealists freedom is the manifestation of reason in the world. Caso accomplishes his inversion by narrowing the definition of reason to include only the conservation of effort and by determining conservation by advantage. Hence, reason, even as conservation, can find no object beyond that which life presents to it. Goodness and beauty, then, are not only ultra-rational with respect to their objects (reason is incapable of defining ends), but also with respect to their operation or constitution.

As was noted above, the peculiarity of Caso's ethic is that charity does not provide any principle by which self-conscious actors can regulate their

conduct. Existence as charity cannot be compelled nor can there be any obligation to actualize it. We may surmise, then, that Caso's theory is not a traditional ethics at all, but an attempt to construct an ontology in which the supreme mode of being is goodness. Although he begins his reflection by revealing an ethical crisis, his definition of life as essentially egoistic deprives ethics of any autonomy and makes goodness dependent not only upon the overcoming of evil, but upon the transcendence of life itself. Yet, for Caso, rational cognition is incapable of attaining to any mode of being beyond life and, so, the transcendence of life becomes equivalent to the transcendence of evil, either through indifference to advantage or through its minimization. In other words, the modes of being beyond life are guaranteed not by knowledge, but by beauty and goodness. Particularly goodness, which is the essence of civilized existence, must be the unsupported guarantor of civilization by providing it with an ontology. In Heidegger's terms, Caso is a "moral existentialist," who makes goodness do the work of ontology. The great problem of moral existentialism, however, is that it must make two dubious and connected claims: A) life is rational, and B) all transcendence of life, which implies the transcendence of reason, is either indifferent to good and evil, or is good in itself. It is clear now why Caso did not explore the six other possible principles implied by his category system, particularly those four which modify indifference to or minimization of advantage by indifference to or minimization of effort. For example, indifference to advantage with minimum effort, or apathy, is anti-vital, but not anti-rational (in Caso's sense), and it has also been traditionally defined as the essence of evil. Similarly, Caso could not admit to the modification of maximum advantage by indifference to or maximization of effort, because to do so would have been to acknowledge that egoism need not be instrumentally rational, but might also be neurotically compulsive.

Caso's development of the attitudes towards existence, then, is incomplete in essential respects. Rather than making the traditional intellectualist and dogmatic claim that knowledge is virtue, Caso makes the anti-intellectualist and equally dogmatic assertion that pure activity, or what one might term will, is virtue. Such an assertion, however, far from resolving the crisis of civilization posed by vitalism, merely intensifies it. Charity, defined as complete self-deliverance in a pure act, is only good, as Kant noted, if the will is good. Yet Caso has no standard for determining the goodness of the will apart from the actualization of the pure act. He can only argue that pure activity and charity are the same because he has previously equated rationality with evil (an act is evil if and only if it is rational). If either irrational evil or rational good are possible, then his system is false. We may note, to anticipate ourselves, that civilization is most directly undermined by irrational evil and most effectively secured by rational goodness.

The Dialectic of Charity

Taking account of the weakness in Caso's attempt to construct an ethical existentialism, we may proceed to analyze how he attempts to make existence as charity function as the supreme ground of an existential ontology. Having demarcated the transcendent realm of existence as charity, Caso offers an interpretation of the two other Christian virtues, faith and hope, in terms of charity. According to Caso, neither faith nor hope is intelligible without having presupposed the intuition of charity. He goes so far as to argue that we are "the authors of the supernatural world (that which is superposed to the natural) and coexistent with it."[14] Interpreted radically and literally this assertion means that the anti-vital realms of being do not exist in any sense until we bring them into being by contemplating beauty or acting charitably. Such an interpretation, however, would leave the realm of the anti-vital groundless and, so, Caso introduces the idea of multiple "orders" of being, which are independent of each other, but which are also in mutual struggle, a conception which creates the problem of how relations between autonomous realms of being are possible. Caso does not solve this problem, but resorts, instead, to the notion that charity, a radically personal act, is grounded in a cosmic process of individuation presided over by God, who is not a formula, a law, or a supreme category, but a person, an "Individual Being." Hence, Caso's final position, in apparent contradiction to his original description of the attitudes towards existence, is to defend a theistic existentialism.

Having based his theism on the intuition of charity, Caso argues that faith is absurd if it is conceived of as anterior to experience. Faith, for Caso, is a type of nonrational knowledge which can have no basis but the pure act of radical conversion: "Whoever puts faith before charity proceeds in the same way as one who places reason before action. Reason can be deceptive; it is constantly deceptive. But life and the good never deceive; they are."[15] Hence, just as reason is an immanent extension of life, so faith is an immanent extension of charity. Faith is merely the belief that the person is grounded in a supernatural being, whose existence is supported by the experience of our ability to reverse the law of life. Hope is at yet a second remove from charity. It does not ground itself, but is derived from "something else which sustains it and communicates its reality."

Existence as Economy, as Disinterest, and as Charity was first published before World War I. Its defense of a nonrational and intuitive ground for the good and for being betrayed an optimism which was to vanish from the mainstream of Western thought in the 1920s. Caso returned to the problem of the relations between the theological virtues in a later work, *The Peril of Man (El Peligro del Hombre)*, written during World War II. The rise of totalitarianisms, some of them based explicitly upon irrationalist claims, and mechanized warfare had chastened his earlier optimism and, so, he undertook

a reinterpretation of faith, hope, and charity. Caso believed that civilization was in danger of being destroyed by rampant collective egoism and needed a firmer ground than intuition could provide. Yet he did not alter his anti-rationalist position, believing, instead, that his original diagnosis of the crisis had been most horribly vindicated. He continued to believe that the vital economy could only be transcended by an act of conversion, but this time he appealed to faith in Christianity, not to what he once considered the essential Christian experience, charity. He argued, reversing his previous discussion, that "what we are most intimately is our belief, our faith."[16] He identified three possible commitments for contemporary philosophy, Marx's messianism, Nietzsche's glorification of life, and Kierkegaard's Christianity, choosing the last as the only one which could renew civilization. He further argued that faith is self-grounded in the will to believe and the "love of love": "Faith comes with the will to believe, neither before nor after it." Love or charity is now the mediator between the supreme theological virtue and hope: "Hope is grounded in love, but love is not grounded in nothing."[17] Caso concluded *The Peril of Man* with Kierkegaard's either/or: "Despair or believe."

The shift in Caso's ordering of the theological virtues from *Existence* to *The Peril of Man* not only indicates a pessimism, which is intelligible in terms of the twentieth-century public situation, and a desperate effort to secure civilization by a return to tradition, but also reveals the ultimate intention of his philosophy. In his two discussions of the theological virtues charity and faith change positions, but hope remains as the resultant of their operation. We may surmise that Caso's entire philosophical effort was motivated by a profound desire to secure, through thought, some grounds for hope that the person is sustained by a higher reality in a society which was not only characterized by rampant individual and collective egoisms, but which legitimated those egoisms in its philosophies. His first attempt to ground hope was accomplished by identifying beauty and goodness with the transcendence over life, while his second effort grounded transcendence over life in a traditional faith. In neither case did he give up his fundamental belief that reason is the immanent extension of life or, in other words, that all reason is instrumental reason serving vital goals. The difference between his first and second discussions, then, is not fundamental. He concluded from the bitter experience of the first half of the twentieth century that charity was too frail a support on which to rest civilization. Yet he had written *Existence* decades earlier just because he had judged that faith had crumbled under the onslaught of positivistic models of public life and could only be renewed if it was given a basis in experience. If anything, the prospects for a revival of Christian civilization were dimmer in World War II than they had been before World War I, so we may conclude that *The Peril of Man* was either a work of desperation or a pragmatic appeal for the benefits of the Christian commitment. That it was the former and that Caso had always nursed a

hunger for hope as deep, though disguised, as Unamuno's "hunger for immortality" is evidenced by his final words: believe or despair. He does not say "believe or disbelieve," or "hope or despair." For Caso, the crisis of our time was the failure of hope that we can transcend life, that there is any ground for belief that we are more than intelligent animals, that there is any belief to sustain the intrinsic value of our charitable acts. In a sense, then, the hidden primacy in Caso's philosophy is the primacy of hope, the virtue which is always vindicated by his philosophy, but which he discussed only briefly. If Heidegger philosophized to make a clearing for Being, Caso philosophized to make a clearing for hope and, so, like Heidegger, for himself.

The Ethics of Charity: Personal and Public

From the standpoint of ontology, Antonio Caso's theistic and moral existentialism suffers from the weakness of all such systems. Tied to the philosophy which they criticize, existential ontologies must either invert their object of criticism, be it idealism or vitalism, or remain within its categories. Yet their ontological failure does not negate their contributions altogether. In the twentieth century existentialism has functioned to defend and vindicate a range of significant human experiences which are not acknowledged by such rationalist doctrines as idealism, positivism, pragmatism, Marxism, and phenomenology. Heidegger's "care", Marcel's "fidelity," Buber's "I-Thou," and Abbagnano's "possibility of possibility" all direct the person to phenomena and "attitudes" which are essential to a full and self-reflective existence. Caso is, of course, in this great existentialist tradition, which seeks to reformulate experiences which were central to an earlier religious era of Western civilization and to carry them forward into a secular society which is oriented, in its public life, towards restricting the range of significant experience to overt behavior. Although Caso was unable successfully to defend an ontology in which charity revealed a higher reality, the experience of charitable action can nonetheless be made actual and is one of the most important possibilities of human existence.

Existence as charity is, in fact, a particularly central human possibility because it touches the core of the self. Following Caso's spirit, though not his attempt to formulate an ontology, we may note that the experience of the self in the twentieth century has been one of profound alienation. As sociologists such as Erving Goffman have observed, in our everyday lives we seek to "present" a "self" to others in order to defend ourselves from exploitation by them and, if possible, to take advantage of them. Hence, if Caso's notion that egoism is the law of life is dubious, at least it seems to be a general feature of our social existence. Exploring the self even more deeply, we find yet another ego which manipulates and constructs the self presented to others, but which

also does not seem to be our "own" in some indefinable way. We are capable not only of perceiving the insincerity of our superficial and social self, but we are also able to feel an insincerity of ourselves towards ourselves. And, finally, there are moments in which the apparently ungrounded judgment that we are insincere towards ourselves, that we are merely using ourselves as means to some ulterior end, is vindicated, not by a rational cognition, but by an action in which we suddenly overcome all of the distance which separates us from both our conventional self-images and our social presentations, and unite ourselves to the other in a spontaneous act of self-expression which is also an act of love and of free sacrifice. Whether such a self-giving yet self-fulfilling act is called generous or charitable, those who have experienced it acknowledge is as a supreme intrinsic value which, as Caso observes, can neither be coerced through social control nor obligated by a rational ethic. The generous or charitable act is, perhaps, the closest that it is possible for human beings to approach the abolition of self-alienation. A fully expressive act which does *not* include love still demands the separation of the self from others and, therefore, from that component of the self which is lodged in the others' perceptions of the self, what William James called the "social self." Although charity may not be a "pure act," it does seem to be the most complete act of which we are capable.

As Heidegger observed there is an irreducible pettiness which characterizes everyday life and which insures that persons remain alien to one another in the "They." Charity overcomes the "They-self" by presenting the self to the other as an end-in-itself at the same time that the other is treated as an end-in-itself. Charity, then, drives the Kantian maxim to treat others as ends-in-themselves, never merely as means, one step deeper to its root of treating others as ends-in-themselves by making oneself fully manifest as an end-in-oneself. Charity cannot be obliged and is, therefore, not a conventional ethical category, because obligation, whether hypothetical or categorical, demands the separation of a judging self from an acting self, while charity *is* the abolition of all such separation.

The difficulty in Caso's philosophy, then, is not the category of charity itself, which he defines with greater lucidity than any of the other existentialists, but with his use of the category to ground an ontology which might justify faith and hope. Remaining strictly within the bounds of descriptive phenomenology, if charity has any ontological significance it is in the demonstration of our ability to unite ourselves to others by uniting ourselves to ourselves, in the supercession of the conventional dualism between self-realization and the realization of the other. Considered phenomenologically, however, charity implies neither faith nor hope. As Caso noted, it merely *is*, in and for itself. The most that can be gained from the intuition of charity is a later commitment to apply reason to seek the

circumstances and contexts which are favorable to its actualization, and to create a character which will infuse future charitable acts with intelligence. Caso, of course, did not draw these implications from the intuition of charity, because he believed that reason was enslaved to egoism. Hence, for him, charity could not be intelligent. This, of course, was his greatest mistake; the surrender of reason to his foes. As Marcel noted, just because we cannot count on ourselves being charitable, the basis of morality in personal relations is a "secondary reflection," in which we become aware of our partiality and selfishness, and attempt to rectify it. Both egoism and charity, as well as the many concrete models of being-towards-others which lie between them, are neither rational nor irrational, but are, in principle, capable of being infused with reason. Most fundamentally, then, Caso used charity as a means to defend faith and hope, because he was unable or unwilling to use reason as a means to defend charity.

For our phenomenological interpretation, charity is a personal and not a public perfection; it cannot serve as the basis for justifying civilized life, but is, instead, the ethical consequent of civilization and not its ground. The ground of civilization is the respect for persons as ends-in-themselves, not the perfection of persons, which is a personal or intimate concern. Civilization can create the moral conditions for intimacy and individuality, but it cannot, even in Caso's terms, make intimacy and individuality its direct object. The question, then, arises of why Caso undermined his own project of vindicating civilization by trying to make a personal perfection the basis of a moral public situation, or, in other words, why he denigrated reason and deprived it of any rights in the realm of ethics. Caso, who was the most influential Mexican philosopher in the post-Revolutionary period, may be held at least partly responsible for the fact that the Mexican Revolution had no coherent public philosophy and for the continuing alienation of Mexican philosophers from their public situation.

Just as the French *philosophes* prepared an intellectual climate favorable to the Revolution of 1789, so the young critics of the Ateneo delegitimized the ideology of the Porfirian regime and helped to create a climate of opinion favorable to the Revolution of 1910. Yet there was a decisive difference between the two intellectual movements, which is explained by the moments of Western history in which they appeared. The *philosophes* were progressives and rationalists, attacking a traditional Christian culture in which political rule was supported by religious myth. By the time the Ateneo appeared rationalism had begun to show some of its disastrous public consequences and nowhere more than in Mexico were those consequences more apparent. We may observe that the Porfirian regime was, perhaps, the earliest example of totalitarianism in the West, imperfect because of the relatively low level of Mexican industrial development, but nonetheless totalistic in its program of substituting "scientific" administration for politics and of

constructing an educational system based on Comte's positive philosophy. The Ateneo, then, was a reaction against positivism and also, by implication, against the positivist glorification of scientific reason. The Ateneo's reaction took the manifest form of re-education in the classics of Western civilization, but Caso's philosophy indicates that its latent intent was to temper secularism and modernization with the Christian values of a previous period of Mexican history. The young critics, then, were neither progressives nor reactionaries, but intellectuals who perceived the costs of modernization and attempted to minimize them by grounding traditional values in new philosophies, just as the German idealists had attempted to purify Protestantism in the early nineteenth century.

Caso and also Vasconcelos failed in their attempts to construct a public philosophy out of a purified Catholicism, and in their later years they both became reactionaries, returning to Christianity as the only buffer against modern egoism. Their failure and their return to tradition can be understood in terms of their original reaction against positivism. Their positivist education had taught them that the only proper use of reason was scientific and their experience of the public situation had taught them that science was merely a tool for rapacious egoists. They never questioned these lessons of their youth and, so, never did surpass their teachers. Their rebellion was moral, not intellectual, in the sense that they accepted the positivistic dogma that reason is only scientific, but declared, against their elders, that reason is evil. If they are to be blamed at all, it is not for their original anti-rationalism, but for their failure to subject the positivist interpretation of reason to thorough criticism in their maturity. This failure was, perhaps, responsible for the collapse of Mexican philosophy into warring schools, imported from Europe and North America, in the post-Revolutionary period, and the consequent absence of any public philosophy in twentieth century Mexico. However, blame should even be tempered here if we consider the situation of philosophy in the contemporary West. There has, as yet, in the twentieth century been no effective defense of practical reason which can limit naturalism and positivism. Heidegger, James, Sartre, and Camus, only to mention a handful, did no better and sometimes did worse than Caso. A public philosophy for the twentieth century has not yet been written and the great question of political philosophy is whether it can be written or whether the supreme possibilities of human existence can only find a personal defense.

Purdue University

De Paul University

Notes

1. Among the many other contributions to crisis philosophy are Edmund Husserl's *The Crisis of Philosophy*, Henri Bergson's *Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, Pitirim Sorokin's *The Crisis of our Age*, and Unamuno's *The Agony of Christianity*.
2. For a discussion of the ideology of the Diaz regime and the means of its imposition see: Leopoldo Zea, *El Positivismo en México*, México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1968.
3. Antonio Caso, *La Existencia como Economía, como Desinterés y como Caridad*, México: Ediciones de la Secretaria de Educación Pública, 1943, 17.
4. *Ibid.*, 18.
5. *Ibid.*, 22.
6. José Gaos has noted that Caso anticipated the existentialists in his *En Torno a la Filosofia Mexicana*, México: Pórrua y Obregon, 1952, vol. 1.
7. Caso, *La Existencia*, 33.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Not all vitalistic thought identifies life with egoism. For example, Georg Simmel described the phenomenon of "sociability," which is a form of play but is indulged in as an end-in-itself. For a critique of Caso's interpretation of the category of life see: Michael A. Weinstein, *The Polarity of Mexican Thought*, University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976, Ch. 3.
10. The problem of how it is possible to know the *principle* of the unconscious when the unconscious is defined as irrational causes difficulties not only in Caso's thought, but in all such vitalistic theories, including Freud's. This is not to say that it is impossible to know specific *contents* of the unconscious.
11. Caso, *La Existencia*, 101.
12. *Ibid.*, 127.
13. *Ibid.*, 154.
14. *Ibid.*, 178.
15. *Ibid.*, 162.
16. Antonio Caso, *El Peligro del Hombre*, México: Editorial Stylo, 1942, 117.
17. *Ibid.*, 125.